OP

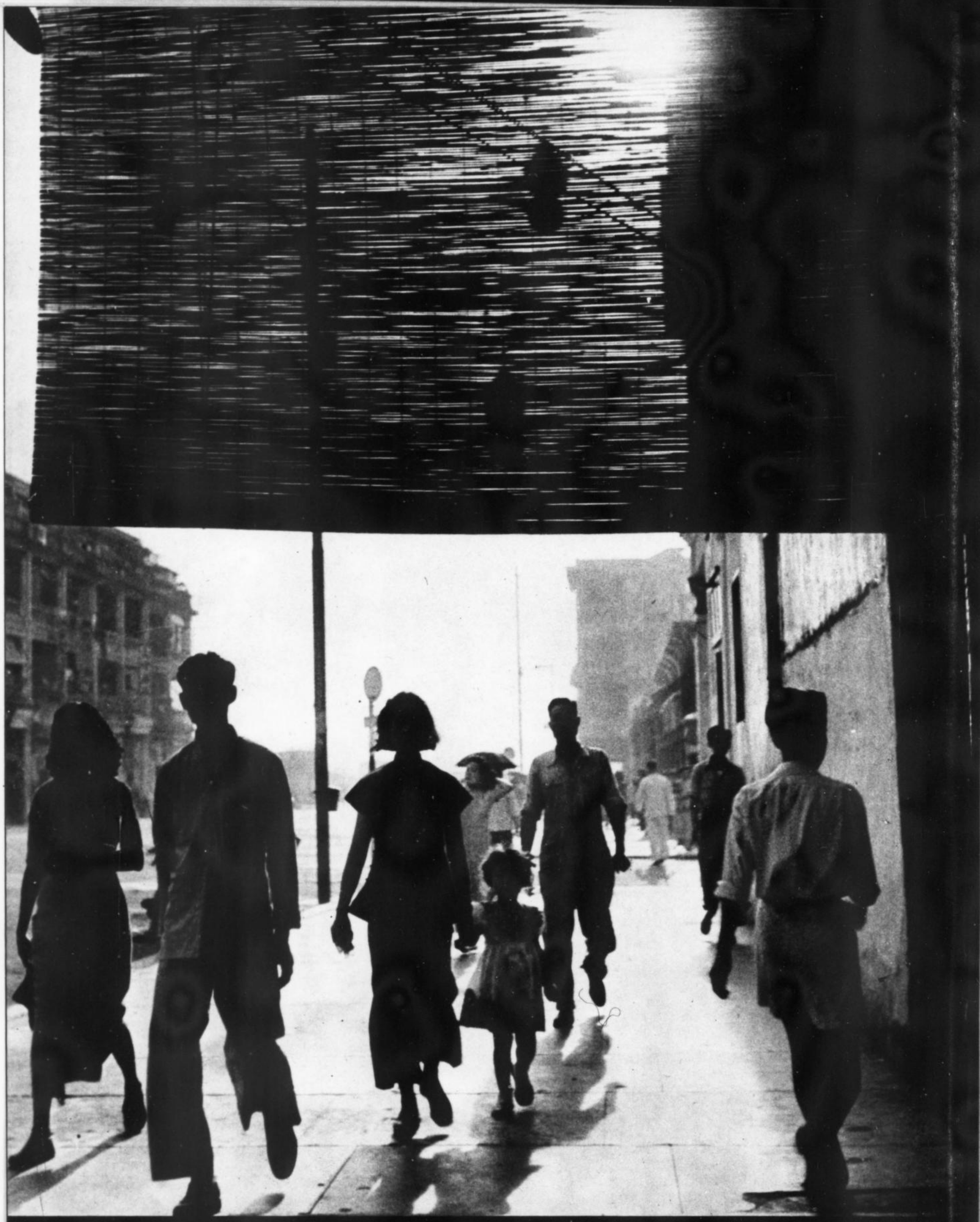
A WINDOW OPEN ON THE WORLD

The UNESCO Courier

SEPTEMBER 1964 (17TH YEAR) PRICE : 50 CENTS

READING ROOM

WOMEN IN THE NEW ASIA



Paul Almasy, Paris

FREEDOM OF THE CITY

In Asia today an increasing number of people are leaving the villages and moving to big cities (above). Here, women find it easier to free themselves from traditional social and religious restrictions and thus take up occupations that have hitherto been closed to them. In the new Asia, economic and social changes have made possible the evolution of a new Asian woman (see article page 5).

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COVER PHOTO

In Asia, as in other parts of the world, there have been revolutionary changes in the status of women. In this issue four women—from Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and Viet-Nam—describe the impact of these changes on their lives and on family life in general in the new Asia.

Unesco - E. Aubert de la Rüe

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WOMEN IN THE NEW ASIA

Almost the whole world has seen revolutionary changes in the status of women—politically, legally, economically, educationally. What do these changes amount to in practice? What has been the effect of this newly-granted status upon day-to-day domestic living?

In an attempt to answer these questions, Unesco has recently published a collection of studies entitled *Women in the New Asia: The Changing Roles of Men and Women in South and South-East Asia (1)* edited by Barbara Ward. Its purpose is to put before the ordinary reader material gathered for two years under the Unesco Major Project on Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values, and thus enable a more realistic appraisal to be made of the past, present and future of millions of women in Asia.

Mrs. Ward points out in her introductory essay that these studies "may help us to emerge a little from the cocoon of our preconceptions, including our own culturally derived sterotypes about what are truly 'masculine' and what 'feminine' social roles—and also about what are really 'Eastern' and what 'Western' patterns of living."

The book examines the impact of the new status of women upon the private domestic lives of both sexes —of families, in fact—in eleven countries: Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaya, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet-Nam and presents personal accounts by women from these countries.

In the preface to "Women in the New Asia", Barbara Ward writes: "In this book Unesco is daring to ask for trouble—for to study the relation between the roles of the two sexes is to do just that. Probably no other topic excites more argument and less agreement, and probably on no other topic is the argument more heated and the disagreement more profound. Nevertheless, we have endeavoured to set out facts and suggest conclusions for the common reader in the West, and also, we hope, in the East, to ponder upon. We hope our endeavour will provoke new argument—perhaps less heated and more enlightened; we even dare to hope that it may produce some measure of agreement here and there."

The Unesco Courier is pleased to present selected passages from this stimulating new work contributed by authors from Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and Viet Nam.

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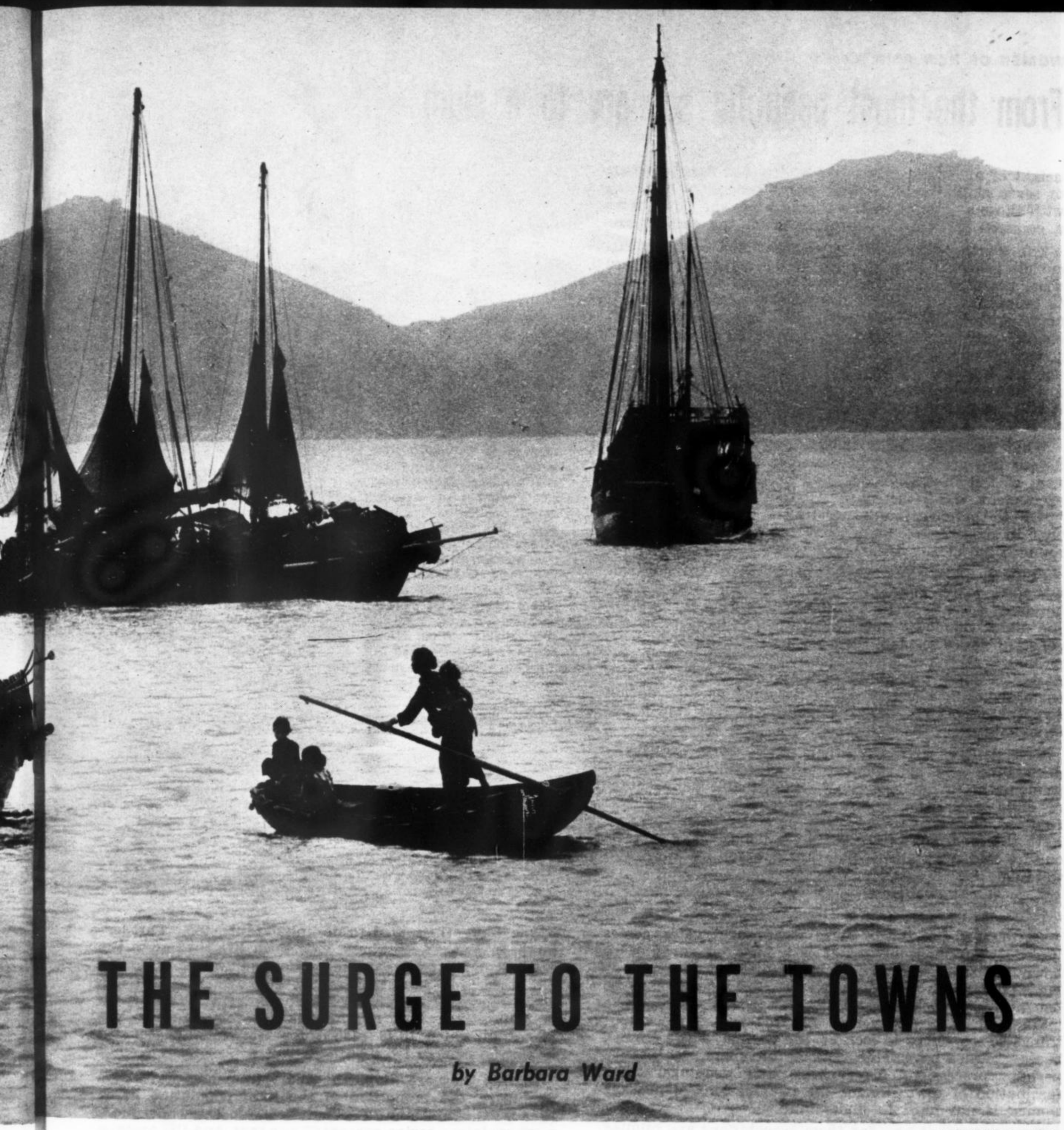
Unesco Courier Archives

The vast majority of the people of South and South East Asia live in villages or towns of less than 20,000 inhabitants. Hardly more than 10% live in bigger cities, as compared with an average of 42% in North American and between 30% and 35% in Europe. But today this picture is changing and from fishing villages and rural hamlets alike there is a surge towards the towns. Perhaps the most striking example of this trend is Hong Kong (left). To meet Hong Kong's population "explosion"city authorities have had to embark on major projects to provide housing and increase water supplies.



THE SURGE TO THE TOWNS

by Barbara Ward

© Paul Almasy, Paris

In 1953 something quite new happened in the Chinese fishing village of Kau Sai, which lies on one of the many islands in the territory of Hong Kong: several fishermen sent their daughters to school. Previously this had been the privilege of sons only. But in the early 1950's Kau Sai was becoming prosperous. Some of the fishing junks were fitted with diesel engines; catches were larger and more regular, incomes higher.

With higher incomes, wives and daughters, as well as sons and grandsons, wanted to buy things. The city had plenty of things to sell, but to find the shops you needed to be able to read—read the shop signs, the street names, the figures on the buses and their destinations. Modern communications were laid on, travel and goods were at the women's disposal—but first they had to be able to read.

In the village literacy was not necessary; town living, even town visiting, was difficult without it. The schoolgirls of Kau Sai illustrate very neatly the interdependence of the many different factors in contemporary social change.

More than that, they illustrate also the surge towards the towns. Between 1951 and 1959 four young fisher boys left the village—prosperous though their families undoubtedly were—for work in the city, and one girl was lucky enough to marry a townsman.

This, which made her the envy of every other woman and the ideal of every schoolgirl in the village, meant that she went to live in a windowless cubicle about 9 feet long and 5 feet broad, whose hardboard walls reached a

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From the most beautiful scenery to a slum

height of about seven feet and which was flanked by six or seven similar cubicles with whose occupants (together with those who slept in the passageway) she now shares a common kitchen-cum-lavatory about ten feet square.

The fourth floor of the tenement which contains this cubicle is reached by a steep, straight stairway, a yard wide, down which all refuse—including night-soil—has to be carried, and which, being no tenant's property, is no tenant's business to keep clean. The tenement is, of course, only one in a street of such buildings, and in scores of such streets. There is a standpipe for water about a hundred yards away. The good fortune of this girl, who now has two children both under three years old, is still the talk of her old friends in the village. She has achieved their highest ambition: she lives in town.

What has she gained? In the eyes of her friends and herself two precious things: freedom from the ceaselessness of toil in the village, and access to glamour and excitement. Both the "push" from the country and the "pull" to the towns are here reflected. There is no doubt that in most countries peasant rural life is an endless round of physically demanding work.

Chinese fishing families are perhaps an extreme example, since they live always (men, women and children) on their boats and many of them work far into the night; moreover they are driven all the time by the constant desire to make good in the material sense. By no means all the other nationalities in South and South-East Asia share this motivation, and, without it, most of them, living in a climate and environment which do not force absolutely continuous effort, do in fact lead a less strenuous life.

Nevertheless, even for them, the work is usually demanding and unending; often especially so for the women who, in addition to the inescapable daily chores of child care, cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood, laundering, and other domestic duties, usually have the more continuous, if less arduous tasks of agriculture laid upon them—planting out, for instance, and weeding.

Though Ceylon's women themselves and men's attitudes towards them have changed, only a relatively small number of women have in practice been able to add to their traditional roles of wife and mother or change their position in comparison with men. In Ceylon most people live in rural areas where change has hardly occurred at all. Right, paddy fields rise tier upon tier like a giant staircase in the countryside of Ceylon.

In the towns tasks disappear; water comes from a tap (what is a hundred yards or so down the street compared with a quarter of a mile or more on a rough village path?); food can quite often be bought ready cooked; charcoal and firewood are in the market; there is electricity. All this and glamour too: things to see, shops to look at, the cinema, a fire engine, buses, crowded pavements, curious foreigners, rich people, perhaps processions for funerals and weddings. The fascination of town life for the imaginations of peasant women is not hard to understand.

The question of how far their expectations are fulfilled can hardly be answered. For the fisherman's daughter from Kau Sai they undoubtedly were. Though to middle-class Western eyes she may appear to have exchanged a healthy open-air life in some of the most beautiful scenery in the world for an overcrowded slum, she is a truly happy woman. She told me so; and I could see that it was true. But for the pavement sleepers of other parts of Hong Kong (or Calcutta, or Bombay, or elsewhere) I cannot say.

Overcrowding, unemployment, slum housing—these are common in all large Asian cities and there are probably many who wish they had never left the land. But we do not always see the alternatives. We need information, more factual studies of the relative advantages of poor town and poor country living and the actual reasons behind the decisions to migrate.

Moreover it is as misleading to think solely in terms of poverty and overcrowding as it is to ignore them. Asian towns have their well-to-do inhabitants too. Furthermore, in Asia as elsewhere, it is town life that gives the greatest opportunities for recreation, cultural activities of all kinds, education, diversified employment—after all, as the derivation of the word shows, towns are the seats of civilization. And, as often as not they are also the places in which it is easiest for traditionally secluded women to emerge from *purdah*.

In this they are atypical. Apart from city-states like Singapore, the proportion of the total population living in towns containing a population of 20,000 or more nowhere in our region exceeds 22 per cent, and the average is not much above 10 per cent. In North America it is 42 per cent (1950), in Europe (excluding Russia) 35 per cent, in the U.S.S.R. 31 per cent. One of the difficulties in the way of mutual understanding between East and West is that the overwhelming majority of Asians are villagers—or small-town dwellers—still.

Nevertheless it is certain that there is a surge towards the towns in Asia, and that it is increasing.

BARBARA WARD *is a British author and an assistant editor of "The Economist". A former lecturer at Harvard University, she is at present a visiting lecturer in the department of anthropology at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Among her most recent books are "India and the West"* (1961) *and "The Rich Nations and the Poor Nations"* (1962).

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CEYLON SILENT VICTORY (PART 1)

by Subada Siriwardena

THE coming of the British to Ceylon in 1796 marked the start of a new era in the history of this country, which from then onwards began to undergo the many changes that paved the way for its present emergence as one of the leading countries in South-East Asia. Plantations of coffee, tea and rubber were introduced, and with them the economic development of the country began. With the introduction of British government the seeds of democracy were sown. With the improvement of the means of communications the country was opened up and became more closely knit.

The traditional legal systems of the country were supplemented and modified to meet modern requirements. Health services began to be within the reach of everyone. Education began to be considered the right of all irrespective of sex, creed or ethnic group, and not as the privilege of a few. More than in anything else there opened a new chapter in the life of women in this country.

Traditionally, society in Ceylon was ordered strictly on a caste basis, which roughly corresponded with a class basis. Those who belonged to the so-called higher caste were the rich upper class, who were landed proprietors and who held responsible posts in government. Until the country fell into the hands of the Portuguese, the Dutch and later the British, these posts ranged from those of ministers and commanders-in-chief down to village headmen, and after the British occupation, from *maha mudaliyar* down to the village headmen. All the paddy cultivators, too, belonged to this Goigama caste, although they were not rich. The rest of the people belonged to the so-called lower castes, each with its traditional caste occupation (1).

Buddhism was the religion of the Ceylonese and Hinduism that of the Tamils, until Christianity obtained converts from both Ceylonese and Tamils. Moslems have

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

(1) *For example: Karava caste (fishermen), Berava (drummers), Salagama (cinnamon peelers), Vahumpora (toddy tappers), Durava (minor arts and crafts), Rada (washermen), Navandanna (blacksmiths, silver and goldsmiths), Rodiya (outcasts). The caste structure of the Tamils is very similar, but the Moslems have only a class structure.*

Most fathers decide...

always followed Islam. Religion was the basis of the culture and the way of life of the people.

In traditional Ceylon it was difficult to draw a hard and fast line between town and country. Even today three-quarters of the population consists of rural people, and the distinction between rural and urban society is something that has been developing only since the beginning of the twentieth century.

To be a good wife and mother was considered the ideal and the perfection of womanhood in all religions and caste groups from the earliest times and even after the coming of Christianity. Religion also fostered this ideal of the perfect wife-mother for the Ceylon woman. Careers were not meant for women... Economically gainful employment for women was unheard of until the coming of the British. Girls had none of the opportunities open to boys to get a formal education in the *pirivena* schools run by Buddhist monks or at the feet of Hindu Brahmin teachers. The few women who happened to be literate had been taught at home by their fathers, or elder brothers, or other elderly male relatives.

Women's position in Ceylon was far from favourable, and they were always considered inferior to men in all aspects, and as a constant source of trouble and wickedness. Even the Buddha is said to have at first refused to admit women to the Sasana (Buddhist clergy) because it was considered very difficult for a woman to lead the austere life of renunciation, since her mind is more prone to be fickle, unsteady and emotional than that of a man.

It is the general belief among Buddhists that one must be a male to become a Buddha, and that *arahantship* (the second highest state of "enlightenment") is more difficult for women to attain. To be born a female is itself considered the result of bad karma in a past birth, and much merit has to be accumulated to be born a man. Hindus have the corresponding belief. It is these beliefs that moulded women's position in society.

Woman was expected to be an affectionate and submissive helpmate to man. She was to be the responsible one in the domain of household duties, of bearing and rearing children, cooking and cleaning, sewing and mending, and ministering to the needs of the husband, parents and parents-in-law and children. It was contemptible for a woman to shirk, these duties which had been assigned to her by birth itself...

Today, with the progress of compulsory education, cultural influence from the West and universal franchise, society itself has changed radically. Caste is less rigid and class less coincident with it. The acquisition of education and wealth has been responsible for a visible mobility in society resulting in the growth of a new middle class to which may belong people of any caste, creed or ethnic group. The majority of the middle class are clustered in the cities and towns. The quest for money and education has further resulted in the rise of a working class of skilled and unskilled labourers, also clustering in the towns except for those working on the tea and rubber estates.

Thus, today's society can be roughly divided into rural and urban sectors. The rural category can be subdivided into the non-cultivator land-owning upper class and the working class engaged in small-scale paddy and other cultivation or in labour. The urban society can be divided into the *elite* upper class, educated and well-off, in important administrative positions or in business, the middle class, educated and moderately well-off in white-collar jobs, and the working class, performing skilled or unskilled labour, with or without a primary education, and poor. All the previously mentioned castes are represented in all these strata of urban and rural society in Ceylon.

These and other changes in the structure of society in modern Ceylon have not been without their repercussions on the life of women. There are now equal opportunities for education from the primary school to the university for both men and women.

In 1957, English and vernacular schools totaled 8,188 of which there were 618 boys schools, 540 for girls and 7,030 mixed. There were 986,333 boys and 846,741 girls attending school, and 1,990 young men and 728 women at the University of Ceylon.

Women now have equal opportunities for employment in any profession or occupation, excepting the Civil Service, and today women in Ceylon do have more chance of promotion. But at the same time it must be said that though Ceylon's women themselves and men's attitudes towards them have changed, this still applies only to a few men, and relatively few women are actually able to avail themselves of the opportunities open to them. The position of women has changed, but only for a few. The old ideal is still popularly accepted, that is, that of getting married and being a successful wife and mother. Only a small percentage of women, and those especially in the urban areas, have been able to add to their roles or change their position in comparison with men. But Ceylon is largely a rural country and the majority live in rural areas where change has hardly occurred at all.

Men of the upper and middle class, even those who have gone through a higher education course at the university or other institutions, prefer to marry stay-at-home wives with a dowry; not salary-earning, educated career women. They also feel that a woman with a higher education and a monthly salary would acquire a sense of independance and not be sufficiently submissive to their husbands. Such men often resent women going out to work or undertaking such activities as driving a motor-car or cycling.

CEYLON'S FIRST WOMAN ARCHITECT

In Ceylon most of the educated women of the present generation are asserting their rights silently but effectively, and some have found themselves in paths of employment which were never trod before by the women of their country. One of them, seen here with some examples of her work, is Ceylon's first woman architect, Minetta de Silva. Her work has included a broad range of architectural designs, from private homes and large-scale housing projects to open-air theatres and low-cost school buildings for Ceylon. Her buildings reflect her search for a synthesis of traditional and modern design—a regional modern architecture. She embodies, as an integral part of the construction, the skills of local craftsmen and artists, as can be seen in the tiled wall (left).

Photos : Magnum-Brake

Thus, many highly educated career girls find it difficult to marry men of equal social and economic status and often continue to live as spinsters. Only a handful are fortunate enough to find husbands who demand neither old-fashioned submissiveness nor a dowry. It is true that working-class men and those of the lower middle-class, where incomes are insufficient to make ends meet, do want their wives to add to the family income by going out to work, but once they become economically well-off they too would wish to keep them safe at home.

As a result most fathers decide to give their girls only a secondary education and stop their schooling after that or even earlier. Instead, they wish to collect money for their daughters' future dowry and trousseau, and train them in household work. Rich parents want their girls to learn accomplishments like music and dancing, which are considered assets in getting a husband with social prestige—perhaps a doctor, a civil servant or a lawyer. But generally speaking, extra pains are not considered worth while in educating girls on equal terms with the boys.

Most of the women of the present generation who are educated are asserting their rights silently, but effectively, and have found themselves in paths of employment which were never trod by women before. Thus today we have women who are highly qualified teachers, university lecturers, doctors, lawyers, librarians and Members of Parliament and, recently, even a woman Cabinet Minister (1).

During 1958, more women students than men entered the University of Ceylon. In the teaching profession, for the year 1957, there were 27,101 women, as against 28,309 men, and of these 890 were graduate women teachers. The nursing profession is entirely a woman's profession. Many more are employed as sales-girls, typists, stenographers and clerks.

All this is the result of education, especially the spread of English education. And the cost of living is so high that most husbands are beginning to feel that it would be a blessing to have an additional income. Nevertheless, for various reasons according to surveys of the city of Colombo and two villages made by the writer, from ten to 20 per cent of the children of school age today are not attending school. Thus, most girls are not in practice able to avail themselves of the opportunities theoretically open to them.

Girls are today going to foreign universities at their own expense or through scholarships sponsored by UNESCO and the International Federation of University Women, etc. They go for courses ranging from university academic courses to courses in home science, nursing and beauty culture. Many educated women are engaged in social service work, running crèches, female adult education, poor relief work, etc. The Lanca Mahila Samitiya is a women's association for such voluntary work.

There is many a working mother in every social class who, after the husband's death, has had to shoulder the burden of bringing up the family entirely alone.

(1) *In July 1960, Ceylon elected the first woman Prime Minister in the world.*

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

SILENT VICTORY

(Part 2)

I was born on December 12, 1928, in a township called Bope in the southern province of Ceylon. My father came from a village in Kalutara district and my mother from another village in the Matara district, both low-country villages. They both belong to families doing paddy cultivation as an occupation.

My father's parents were both illiterate but well-to-do farmers, and father was the youngest child in a family of thirteen. He was educated in the *pirivena* schools at the feet of Buddhist monks and was successful in the Cambridge examinations through his own efforts. He acquired a government scholarship to the University of Oxford, where he received his B. Litt. in Western Classics. From there he proceeded to Berlin University, where he did further linguistic studies and to Queen's College, Benares, for a further course in Sanskrit. He was head of the Department of Indo-Aryan Languages at the University of Ceylon for some time.

My mother's parents were both literate, and were also rather well-to-do farmers. She was the fifth in a family of eight children. She was an uncertified Ceylonese teacher when she was given in marriage at the age of 24 to my father, who was in his forties at the time. No dowry had been asked or given. The parents had decided for her and she had simply to consent. My father did not wish her to go out to work, and with reluctance she had to give up her job. Within one year after marriage I was born. My grandmother and my mother's elder sister helped to bring me up as a baby. After two years my brother was born and when he was two years old a sister also arrived.

We lived in a country house surrounded by a large garden and paddy fields, with the tributary of the Kalu Ganga flowing past on one side. Our childhood was a very happy one until my father died of a heart attack when I was just 11 years old. My father was strict, but also a lovable companion. He used to play with us indoors and outdoors and take us bathing in the river, and he helped me in my studies. He did not make me read books all the time. He took me out for walks and made me observe the surroundings, and recounted incidents about his travels abroad. He instilled in me as a young child the idea of what a long, unending but happy process learning is. He took me out on visits to the "Sunday Fair," to the city of Colombo, and to my paternal relations in the village, who were all illiterate, hardworking and simple farmer folk.

My father never for a moment forgot or belittled his native village or even the areas around it. As a monument of his love for the villagers, he founded an English school for them with his savings, the first and the only such school for miles around, at that time—the early 1930s. Very low fees were levied and he was the principal. This school was handed over to the government one year before he died in 1939.

On my father's death the burden of bringing up the family fell on my mother's shoulders. More than anything else she strove to meet my father's last wish on his death bed—to give us children a good education.

The other important influence in our lives has been my maternal uncle, who is a Buddhist monk engaged for the last twenty-five years in missionary work in Penang (Malaysia). He has been my spiritual guide ever since the death of my father, and even now we seek his advice on all important matters.

By the time I was 14 my mother had trained me to cook and sew and look after the younger ones. We were all also sent to both Christian and Buddhist English schools in the cities of Panadura and Colombo. Later my brother and I both graduated at the University of Ceylon, but my sister gave up school after a few years.

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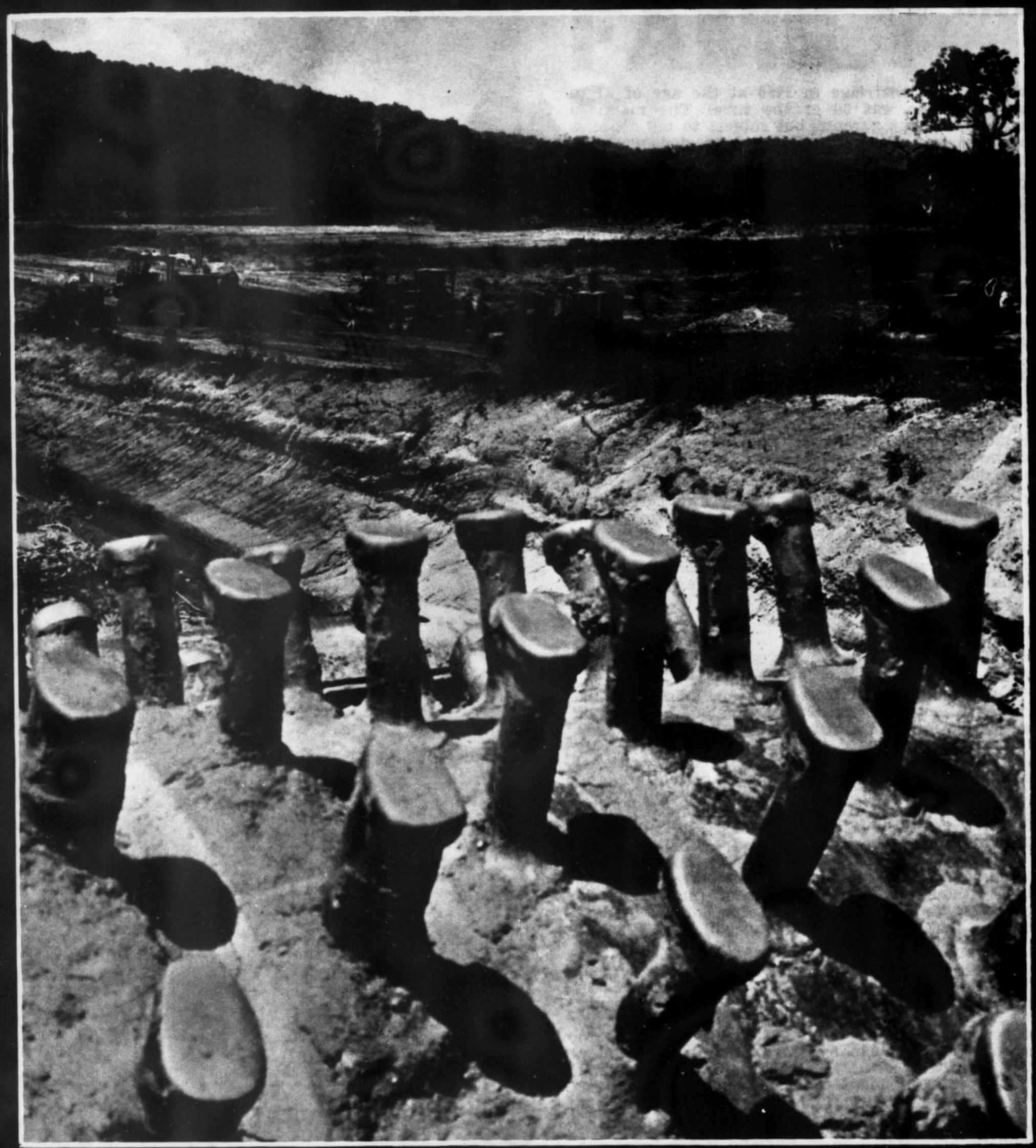
NEW LANDS WON FROM THE JUNGLE



Photos WHO-Paul Almasy

In the Gal Oya valley of Ceylon, bulldozers rip their way into the jungle and build roads (above). They have already opened new lands for 50,000 farmers. Over 40 villages have been completed and more than 200 square miles of former jungle land now produce an average of 1,200 to 1,500 kilogrammes of rice per acre. Malaria has been eradicated and the valley's main town, Amparai, with a population of 5,000 has a daily air link with Colombo, Ceylon's capital. Above left, led by its ox cart, a family moves towards lands wrested from the jungle. Left, a family installed in its new home. Loans are available for the purchase of cattle, seeds and food until the first harvest. Although the land remains the property of the state, the head of the household can bequeath his rights to his heirs, whether sons or sons-in-law.

Career woman but...

I was given in marriage in 1956 at the age of 27 to my husband, who was 30 at the time. The marriage was arranged by my parents, but subject to my consent. My husband is a Food and Drugs Inspector, educated in Ceylon and England. Dowry was not asked or given at our marriage, which was an orthodox Ceylonese Buddhist ceremony but for the fact that it was held at a public hall. We are of the same caste and religion.

We live with my own mother and her family in Kandy, an arrangement which is very convenient for me as our baby daughter, who was born within a year after our marriage, can stay happily at home—while I continue with my university work.

Immediately after graduation I took to the teaching profession, the vocation I had chosen ever since I was a little pupil under my great father; and I acquired the diploma in education at the University of Ceylon three years after graduation and on the eve of my marriage. My husband soon understood my desire to continue to learn and, as he was convinced that I would not assume undue independence, he allowed, and indeed encouraged, me to start reading for the M.A. in Education. This I am now doing.

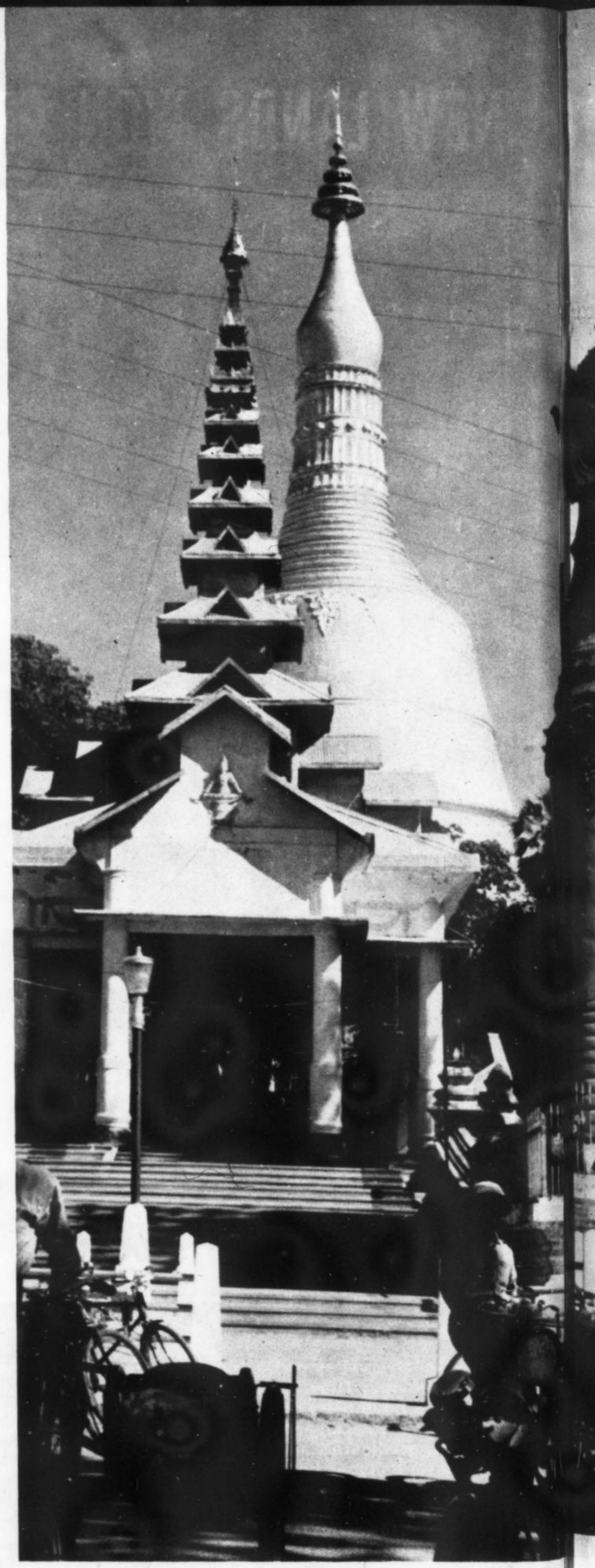
I travel daily to the university in my own car, which I drive myself. My husband takes pride in my work, even in the face of some criticism from his colleagues. I have not seen a husband more interested in his wife's continuing to study, even denying for himself much of the attention traditionally due from a wife.

But although I have a certain amount of independence which most women in Ceylon do not enjoy, this does not mean that I have deviated much from the ideal pattern of the wife and mother: My position at home follows very much the traditional pattern. My husband decides all important matters, and often it is acceptable to me. He commands and I obey. Except on scholarly matters it is not for me to argue with him. I have to accept the fact that he knows best and that this is all for my own good. I never go out or do anything outside the precincts of the home without his permission. But we do discuss important matters together, although the tendency is for him to decide finally. I feel quite happy and secure in this manner.

We have no special preference for either sons or daughters, and when our daughter was born we were both happy. She is given the comforts that we can afford, by way of food, clothing, toys and attention. As a rule once we are back home for the day after work, we give her our company and it is seldom that we leave her to go out for an evening. We should feel sorry to deprive her of our company them. She loves to play and talk to us. I feel very proud that I breast-fed my daughter for ten full months, just as my mother did for me.

We hope to give her the best education available in this country, and later even in England if she turns out to be enterprising and interested. We shall leave it to her whether or not to choose a career or what career to choose. Whether she has a career or not, we wish to see her happily married to an intelligent, educated good-natured, well-mannered and understanding Ceylonese Buddhist. Provided these characteristics are there we do not mind her making the choice of the young man without allowing us to arrange her marriage.

SUBADA SIRIWARDENA *is a Ceylonese educationist. Since writing this article she has obtained her M.A. and is now working for a Ph. D degree in education. She intends to publish a work on "Growing up in a Ceylon Village" in the near future.*



The 324 foot spire and gleaming dome of the Shwehmawdaw Pagoda dominate the skyline of the city of Pegu, 60 miles from Rangoon, the Burmese capital. "Chinthe", giant statues of mythological animals, guard the entrance to this pagoda which was largely destroyed by an earthquake some 30 years ago. It was eventually rebuilt with the help of funds subscribed by the people of Burma.

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BURMA

FAMILY IN TRANSITION

by Ni Ni Gyi

THAT her grand-daughter in short sleeves and high-heeled sandals should be at a cocktail party with a glass in her hand (even though it be orange or tomato juice) is hardly a picture that my grandmother Daw Mein Ka Lay would have imagined in her wildest dreams half a century ago. We have certainly come a long way since the *ya-hta-lone*, the Burmese horse and buggy days. In her time Ma Mein Ka Lay, as my grandmother was called, was dedicated to the home and spent all her time at household chores, and would never go out at night except maybe to a pagoda festival, and then only in the company of the whole family.

Thus it is evident that even the staid and conservative Burmese culture which had always boasted of being impervious to the influences of "foreign matter" is showing signs of thawing...

My family cannot be described as a typical Burmese family, as the typical Burmese family would live on a farm, be literate in Burmese only, be engaged in farming and maybe never get to the big cities except on a pilgrimage. My family can best be described as urban (we settled down in Rangoon when my father retired from government service) with the socio-economic status of a middle-class family, and we are staunch Buddhists...

It should be interesting to find out the changes that have taken place from the days of my grandmother, who lived under the last reigning Burmese king, to mine, the post-Independence days. The span of time includes Burma under the rule of Burmese kings, the British regime, Japanese rule, re-occupation by the British and independent Burma...

In my childhood the family was made up of my grandmother, father, mother, my sisters, an aunt (my mother's cousin) and cousin who was really a poor relative living with us. The family was mobile in the sense that it moved wherever my father was transferred (he was the

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

Children of the calendar

principal of a high school) and he was posted in each town for a few years at a time...

The family system was very strong and absolute respect and obedience were shown all along the line. Even the children had to obey the next in line, according to their ages. The deep-seated belief is that one is to show respect for people even if they are one day older than you are. My grandmother, being the oldest in the household, formed the apex of authority and respect and she was followed by father, mother, aunt and cousin down to the children, from the eldest to the youngest. Burmese children from childhood are instilled with the idea of absolute reverence for the following in the order given: Lord Buddha, his teachings, the clergy, parents and teachers. This is the reason why implicit obedience is accorded the parents.

The attitude is somewhat changed now; the trend is towards more rational obedience, and relations between my mother and ourselves are on a more informal plane. I noticed as a child there was never any familiarity or outright friendliness between my grandmother and my father or mother; she was treated with too much awe to allow that. Whereas now, if my mother makes a certain decision, we are able to explain things to her and even disagree with her and she takes it in the best light. In fact, when I accompanied my husband on a world tour in 1955 my mother was very much against it, but I was able to make her understand my point of view and even got her blessing for the trip...

IN the matter of giving names to children there is still much adherence to tradition. Every Burmese child's name depends on the day of birth. Since time immemorial, wise men have laid down a code making certain sounds synonymous with certain days of the week. To give myself as an example, as I was born on a Saturday my parents could only name me from one of the following sound: "ta", "hta", "da", "na".

In other words my name could being with only the T, D or N sounds. Accordingly I was named Ni Ni. It is only a first name and has nothing to do with my father's, since in Burma we do not have family names. No strict Burmese family will have any other criterion for choosing a name for a baby. Thus in Burma it is quite easy to guess someone's day of birth once you hear the name. The only modern touch in the matter of names is that most modern families are coming to realize the confusion caused by having only personal names and are beginning to add the father's name to the daughter's for purposes of identification.

For example, just as Mary, daughter of Mr. Smith, is Mary Smith, Ni Ni, daughter of U Maung Maung Gyi, is now called Ni Ni Gyi. Wives, too, are beginning to take on their husband's names in addition to their own, thus if I wanted to be modern I could call myself Ni Ni Nyunt, as my husband's name is U Hla Nyunt.

In the matter of education, my grandfather went to a monastery where he learned the three Rs but more of religious instruction. My grandmother went to a lay school were she studied the three Rs and scriptures as well. The reason for the girls going to a lay school was that it was not proper for the monks to teach girls. By the time my mother went to school, Rangoon could boast of a modern school called the Empress Victoria Buddhist Girls' School and my mother and aunt were proud to be its pupils and to learn English there. At that time my maternal grandmother's idea was to give them enough "modern education" to enable them to read English newspapers and she made them leave school after middle grade. It was strongly felt that a full education was only for the men...

The philosophy with regard to education had greatly changed when we reached school age. My father, in particular, had a very practical philosophy. Since he had no sons he was determined to give his daughters the best education he could. He explained that the best legacy parents could give children was education, and often repeated the well-known cliché that education is a pot of gold that no one can steal. He thus sent us as boarders to a convent renowned for its high standard of education.

My grandfather was at first very much against the idea of our going to an English school where we wore only European clothes and were given English names. He could not for a long time resign himself to the idea that we were giving up our national dress (even though temporarily) and our own names for the sake of learning to speak English, but he finally gave way in favour of the cause of education.

In our generation two of the daughters got the benefit of foreign education. One of my sisters went to study in England before the war. At that time the usual reaction

Photos © J. Ph. Charbonnier - Réalités

In an open-air restaurant set amid the stalls of a Rangoon market, Burmese families (left) enjoy a meal of "mohinga" (soaked rice pounded and passed through a sieve before being cooked) accompanied by fish or meat and sauces. This animated scene contrasts sharply with the Rangoon marriage group (above). The young wife wears a traditional bridal robe and her husband is dressed in a tunic and a ceremonial "paseo", a kind of sarong reserved for great occasions.

to the idea of a young unmarried girl going abroad was not very favourable. Quite a few of our elderly relatives criticized my parents for letting a young girl go alone to a stange country, where she might be exposed to the "wild ways of Western civilization." When I went to study in the United States as a State scholar a decade later opinion had changed considerably and my going abroad met with complete approval from everyone.

At the present time every family takes pride in having a member going abroad to study. In fact things have reached the point where even elderly people would love to go abroad if "they could only get the chance," at least on a pilgrimage. This is a clear indication of social change and changing attitudes towards travel and the lessening of suspicion of the West and what it has to offer.

To return to the matter of dress: my grandmother wore white cotton jackets (almost Chinese style) complete with cloth buttons, fixed her hair up with one or several combs on the top and walked sedately so that not even her ankles showed. Her tight sleeves came down to her wrist and her *longyi* to her ankles, and her hair for formal occasions was done up like a cake on her head.

The above style of dress still prevailed until the end of the war. However, the post-war fashion is to wear short or three-quarter sleeves and now the present generation of teenagers and young girls go in for sleeveless jackets, brassières, short knee-length skirts and high-heeled sandals.

I feel it is pertinent to write a few lines here about certain innate beliefs and mores that neither education nor modern times can shake off. In spite of the fact that the Burmese woman has "gone modern" in more ways than one, it is almost paradoxical to see the way she sticks to certain of her ultra-traditional ways. Speaking for myself, I will never leave on a journey on the "bad" days of the month and will invariably undertake major items like choosing the day for the wedding, shifting house, buying property, etc., only on the "good" days, and these "good" and "bad" days are specified on each month of the Burmese calendar.

To give another example, I would never bath or shampoo my hair while my husband was away on a journey unless I had definitely asked for permission to do so, prior to his departure, as washing one's hair when a member of the family is away is believed to bring ill-luck to the traveller. On the other hand I fight with grim determination against the custom that one is not to cut one's hair or nails on a Friday, Monday or on the day you were born, and I do it any time the necessity arises. Nor do I adhere strictly to the mealtime custom of giving the first serving of every dish to the oldest or masculine member of the family.

If a husband and wife are eating together, traditionally the wife is not supposed to help herself to anything until she has given a small spoonful to her husband first. This custom is fine in that it is a symbol of respect, but we find it more convenient to by-pass it and have done so by mutual agreement between ourselves. If, however, my

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

World of the new 'rice winners'

mother or any elder is with us for a meal, both my husband and myself are prompt with the symbolic gesture.

One feature of our generation which was not common in the time of my mother and grandmother is the emergence of the career woman. Burmese women have always been noted for their shrewd business acumen and their ability to stand on their own as village chiefs, and have even sat on the throne at different stages of Burmese history, but their taking to regular careers is a new phenomenon.

The rising cost and standards of post-war living have made it necessary to have two incomes in order to live well. Although, the husband's income may be sufficient for the basic needs of the family, any additional income contributed by the wife will afford the family the extra amenities of modern living. In addition to this economic reason, the modern educated woman feels a sense of independence in having her own career and is thus eager to make use for the excellent opportunities now offered to educated women. Besides, it adds a touch of prestige to the family's reputation as both are bread-winners.

IN my grandmother's and mother's day, the position was reversed. The husband took pride in the fact that he was the sole "rice-winner" and that his wife could afford the luxury of staying home. We find that the modern career woman-cum-housewife is heavily burdened with social obligations after office hours. In addition to her own professional social contacts, she is also expected to keep up with her husband's. Consequently, the woman who combines the roles of housewife and career woman has a full-time job, out-of-office-hours professional obligations, her evening social engagements, and the task of running a home, does take a great deal out of the modern woman . . .

The Burmese woman has always had a distinct place in public life. Theoretically speaking, there is no social or legal barrier to her holding any position in the land. Throughout Burmese history, the position of Burmese women has always been on a par with that of men. Traditional law recognizes us equally with men and all through our history we have had full inheritance rights. However, apart from the days when women ruled the country, the Burmese women have not taken any great interest in politics. There is no great political consciousness such as is to be found in some other countries. Accordingly, there is no Burmese counterpart of the political stature of Mrs. Pandit, Mrs. Sun Yat Sen or Mrs. Roosevelt . . . This apathy towards politics may be attributed to the general passive philosophy of the Burmese Buddhist mind.

We have certainly come a long way from the days of my grandmother. We have marched forward but with restraint. If in some ways the pendulum of social change has swung too fast, it has been because we were swept on by the inevitable chain of social evolution.

NI NI GYI *was educated in Rangoon. Burma, and in the United States where she went to study as a State scholar. She has since held several literary posts. She is married to U. Hla Nyunt, a leading Burmese scientist, whom she met while a student at Columbia University, New York.*

From "Bangkok" by Martin Hurlimann
© Thames and Hudson, London, 1963

This narrow lane running between gardens and courtyards was typical of old Bangkok before modern roads were driven through it. It is now a metropolis of over one million people and with its many transformations has come a wave of social changes. Today Thai women are taking advantage of the new standards of equality of opportunity for both sexes and the new economic order. Education has given them access to positions of influence in a more specialized society. Freed from home-centered work women nowadays often engage in petty trade, home industry or salaried office positions.

THAILAND

'I AM NO LONGER THE HIND LEGS OF AN ELEPHANT'

by Pramuan Dickinson

WHEN I asked my parents' approval of my decision to get married, my mother said: "If your grandmother were still alive she would be shocked by this." This was because I had decided to marry a young man from a place far from our community, and our hemisphere—in Canada. It was so unusual that a strong protest was to be expected, at least at first. "But the world has been changed a great deal," said my father, "how can one resist such a great change?"

My father was right. The world has been changing a great deal from my grandmother's days to our present time. My grandmother married a man from the same community, but whom she had never met before. My mother became a little acquainted with my father before they married, but he came from a place in Central Thailand far from her community. This was something of a shock because my father spoke a different dialect and no-one in the family had ever heard of the village he came from.

When my parents married, one part of the country seemed almost like a foreign country to another. A wild mountainous jungle between the north-east and central districts made it very difficult for people to travel back and forth. It used to take my grandfather two months to cross by elephants. Now, on a modern highway, one can cross within two hours by car.

In my grandmother's day it was unusual for women, especially unmarried girls, to travel very far from home. My grandmother, like all girls of her age, was educated at home only. She was taught by her mother to work in the household—cooking, spinning, weaving and sewing. My grandmother did not learn to read and write because it was thought not proper for girls to do so.

My grandmother had nine children altogether. The first, a boy, was sent to study with the monks when he was about 12 years old. My mother was the second child. My grandmother did not object to her daughters learning to read and write at all. Therefore my uncle was encouraged to teach his younger sisters in his spare time from the monastery.

When my grandmother's fifth child was about 10 years old, a school for girls was set up in the community, and she was sent to it. My mother was too old to go, so she continued to study at home until she married my father who helped her to learn both reading and writing.

In my generation education was compulsory up to the fourth grade. But most parents who could afford it liked their children, boys and girls alike, to continue up to the end of secondary school which was available in the home town, and if possible to have further study in Bangkok.

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THREE VILLAGES UNDER A MICROSCOPE

DURING the past year or so three remote country villages in Thailand have been put under the microscope. In Napa, in the central rice-growing plain of the Bangkok region, Udorn, on the edge of the jungle in the north east, and Umeng, in the far north near the Burmese border, a cross-section of some 200 children and their families have been observed, studied and interviewed at length, each community survey lasting about six months.

These operations are part of a unique survey carried out by the Bangkok Institute of Child Study, founded nearly nine years ago jointly by Unesco and the Government of Thailand. The study was carried out because Thailand, like many other countries, is trying to improve and extend its education system, and knowledge about the nature of the child is the cornerstone of any development in education.

During the survey, researchers have been asking questions such as "What do you fear most in school and out of school?" "What do you enjoy most and why?" "What kind of responsibilities and home tasks do you have and how do they effect your going to school?" "Do you like having girls (or boys) with you in class?" Mothers have also been interviewed and the general make-up of each village with its economic and social structures has been thoroughly investigated.

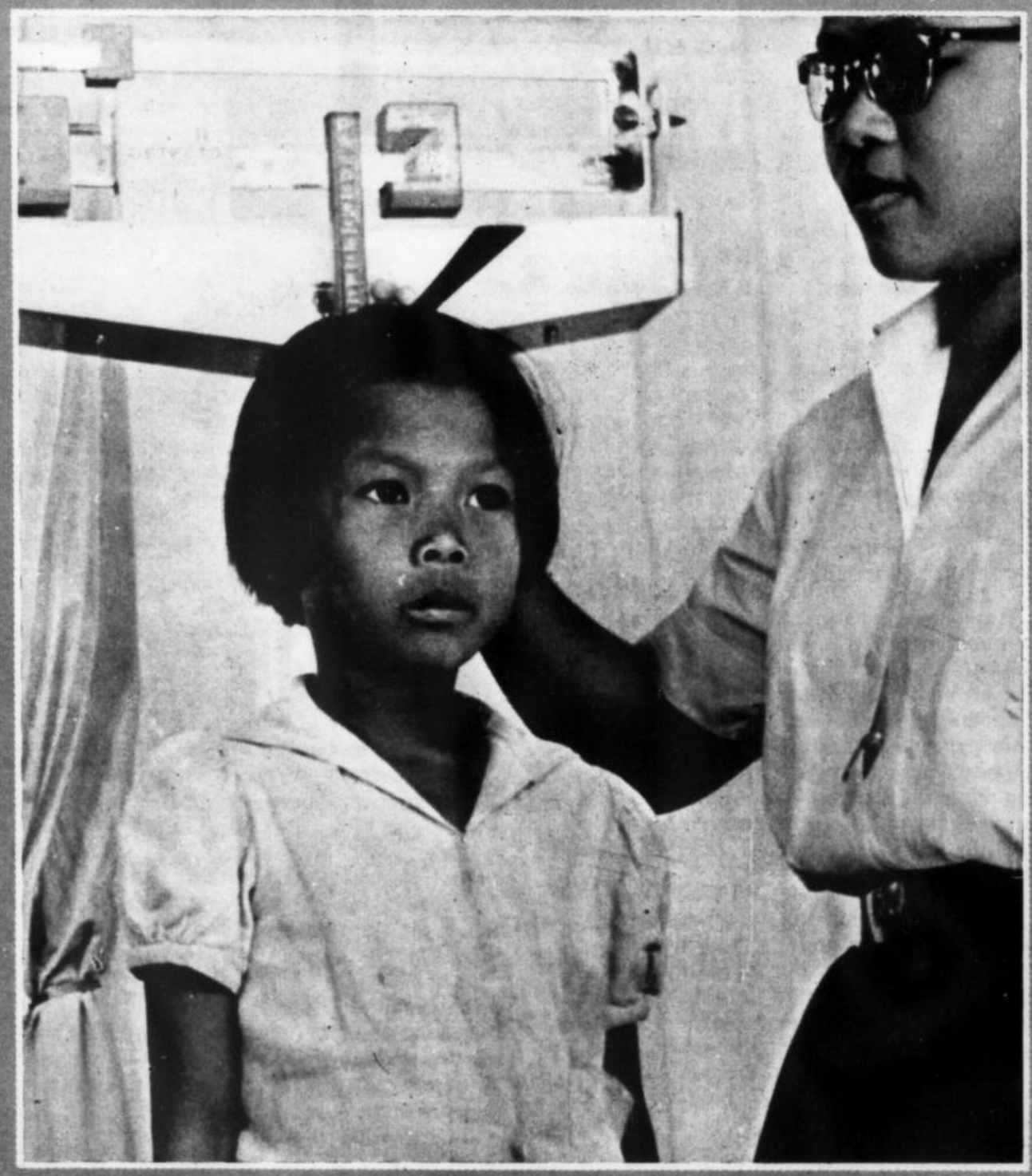
In Thailand today social changes are taking place in rural areas where, as

CONT'D ON PAGE 20

Below, a building with striki ode girl teachers live during thei o y training college. There are no im

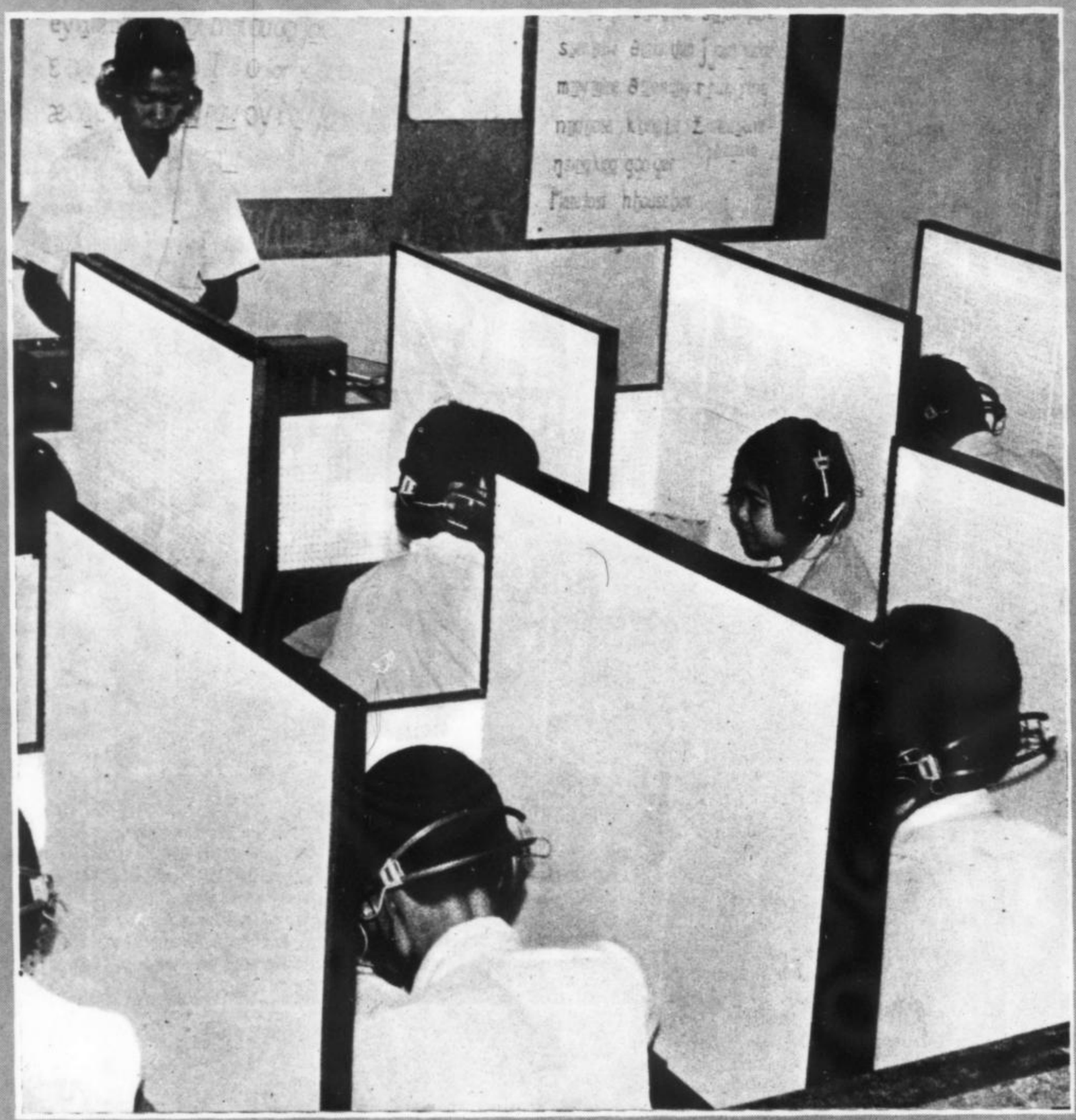
The Rural Teacher Training College at Ubol is one of several educational projects that Unesco is assisting in South-East Asia, particularly in Thailand, where the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia is situated. Above, Thai youngsters play a lively game of musical chairs between classes in a Thailand village school. Below, a young miss gets her regular weight-and-height check-up in a village school. The teachers in this school come from the nearby Ubol training college. During their second year of training teachers have 11 weeks of practical teaching experience in "laboratory" schools near Ubol.

Left, pupil teachers in the science laboratory of the Thailand-Unesco Rural Teacher Education Project at Ubol, Thailand, 400 miles from the capital, Bangkok. This joint venture by the Government of Thailand and Unesco was launched eight years ago to train more teachers for primary schools.



strikin odern lines where some 500 fledgling g thei o year course at the Ubol teachers' re nov similar colleges operating in Thailand.

Photos Unesco — R. Greenough



Pupil teachers at Ubol training college in Thailand learn English aided by up-to-date audio visual teaching devices. While mastering the intricacies of the language, particularly its pronunciation, they sit in separate booths using tape recorders and individual earphones to listen to the playback of their own voices. About 1,000 young men and women are currently taking Ubol's two and four year courses.

Three villages *(Cont'd)*

in most Asian villages, little has changed in the past century until recently. New ways of behaving and living challenge traditional customs. The staff of the Bangkok Institute therefore has been investigating the factors in home, school and community life that affect the adjustment of children to learning and to becoming responsible citizens.

They have been seeking the answers to questions like these: "What are the existing and potential points of stress and strain on children entering school?" "What kinds of teaching methods and what aspects of educational programmes are best fitted to ease the transition from one kind of society to another?" "What techniques may lead to conflict between the child and the school or the child and the family?"

No final conclusions from the survey will be available until a fourth village, in the south towards the Malay peninsular, has been visited later this year. But it is already clear that from the experience gained by the researchers it will be possible to evolve a new methodology which can be used for similar investigations in other Asian countries.

This is already of great value because the methode and yardsticks used in Western surveys of child and family psychology have been found to be of little value in Asia. Any system of education is part of a whole pattern of values, social aspirations, traditions and folkways. An attempt to transplant educational ideas, techniques or methods bodily from one culture to another may destroy this pattern.

SOME differences were at once apparent when tests used in Western surveys were applied to Asian children. It was found that in a general way the Asian child's mind is more contemplative, more shy and withdrawn, less impulsive and aggressive and less competitive than that of the Western child. The survey showed too that the Asian child has a tremendous and genuine desire and respect for learning, probably due to the influences of the village Buddhist temples which for many years were the sole repositories of education.

Side by side with these surveys, the Bangkok Child Institute has been carrying out a nation-wide programme in curriculum evaluation. Nearly 300 schools, some 70,000 children and 1,200 teachers have been involved in an operation which made use of tests and questionnaires. Achievement tests were devised to measure a child's abilities in arithmetic, reading, writing, geography and natural sciences.

In addition to its research work, the Institute has a training programme as a graduate school for Bangkok's College of Education with two-year courses in general, educational and clinical psychology; child development, statistics and physiology, leading to a Master's Degree in Education. Sixteen graduate students are now taking this course. Fellowships, including some from Unesco, have been granted to students from 11 countries, emphasis being given to provide facilities for training Asian students in research and teaching methods for use in Asian villages.

The Institute's work is directed by Dr. Lemaimas Saradatta, a leading Thai woman educator, and its staff includes two Unesco specialists and a number of Thai graduate researchers.

Reading and writing now proper for girls

Boys still had a better chance because they could stay at monasteries in Bangkok. Only rich people could afford to send their daughters to expensive boarding schools, but every year the government granted some scholarships to both boys and girls to study in the field of education. This was the only chance for girls of poor families to go to school in Bangkok, and only provided that they were very bright.

At present it is quite different. Girls have many more opportunities for education. They may now choose careers as teachers, doctors, lawyers, and many other professions.

When I was of school age, my father decided to take over the running of a mine of precious stones in the wilderness of the jungle. There was no school at the mine, which was at least one week's journey by elephants from the nearest town, so my parents decided to leave me with my grandmother.

I stayed there for some years. Then the time came when I had to leave for further study in Bangkok. I was sent to a well-known boarding school for girls. I was the first girl of the family to come out of the home to a school so far away. I was to go even further later on when I was given a Unesco fellowship to study at the University of Toronto, in Canada, where I met the man who became my husband.

Looking back at the family history, I can see a tremendous change in the expectations about women's roles in the family. My grandmother used to tell me how she was selected as a wife. One day as she was weaving, an elderly lady whom she knew dropped by and watched her closely as she worked. It dawned on my grandmother that the lady had a son who was just at the right age to get married. He had entered the monkhood for one period of the Buddhist Lent, and was now accepted as being a mature man who was ready to "have family." It was the mother's duty to look for a suitable wife for her son. If she had someone in mind, she would make a thorough check as to whether the girl was good at home-making, especially cooking, weaving and spinning—the handicrafts expected of her. My grandmother was right. A few days later, her mother told her that the lady had asked for her to be married to her son.

I told my grandmother that I would have been angry because nobody seemed to care what the girl herself might feel, and also that the girl should have the right to select her husband. My grandmother laughed and said: "Grandchild, we girls at that time did not bother very much talking or even thinking about 'rights' as you do now, but we were still very happy. There is an old saying, 'A woman is the hind legs of an elephant.' That means that you are to be the follower only, and I had done my duty as a good follower. That's all."

I did not know my grandfather, who died very young. He alone worked outside the home. He gave all the money he earned to my grandmother who kept the budget, ran the household, looked after the children and made cloth for the whole family. Besides being the place to live in, the home was a school and a small factory in itself. It was the only place for a woman to work.

In my mother's day, the majority of women still stayed at home. Very few had independent careers. Wage-earners were almost all men. There was only one woman in the local town who had a job as a teacher. Another woman, a nurse, worked in Bangkok.

At present, it is not unusual for women to earn their own living. Most young wives and mothers take jobs outside their homes. All my female cousins of my age are now wage-earners. Families have become smaller than those in my mother's day. Most families can no longer take in all the distant relatives as dependents in the household. In most cases where mothers work, servants must be hired to help in the home.

My grandmother always quoted the old saying: "Your husband is a shading umbrella to protect your head. He makes you look pleasant and respectable to all eyes. Therefore, obey him." At present, some wives might say: "But the world has changed a great deal, man and wife must be mutually dependent toward each other, there is no such thing as absolute obedience on the wife's part now."

Within three generations, roles expected of men and women, boys and girls, have been tremendously modified by the great change of the world. And the rate of change has increased rapidly. I believe there was little difference between the social life of my grandmother and her own mother. But in the case of my mother and myself, one can see a big gap between the two generations, and the change is still going on very rapidly.

By the time my own children are grown up, what will they think of their great-grandmother's days?

PRAMUAN DICKINSON *is the young Thai wife a Canadian. She met her husband while studying at the University of Toronto under a Unesco fellowship. She now lives in Bangkok where she holds a research post in the Thailand-Unesco Institute for the Study of Child Development*
(See article, page 18).

The fish pond at the college farm attached to the Ubol teacher training college. Here, students destined for schools in rural areas learn agriculture, animal husbandry, poultry and fish raising as part of a programme in community development. Graduate teachers report wide village acceptance of changes in agricultural practices as, for example, the raising of vegetables and even cotton and jute crops outside the present rice-growing season.

Photos Unesco-R. Greenough

VIET-NAM TWENTY YEARS OF CHANGE AND TURMOIL

by Le Kwang Kim

I am thoroughly bored with this essay on Voltaire! I have no desire this evening to emulate his caustic wit. Saigon, in this stormy May weather is oppressive; in the hot and humid air the body is damp with sweat and the mind is incapable of effort. Nevertheless, I must finish my essay or else I know what I shall hear from the professor on the subject of the usefulness of higher education for girls, on their proper place in the home, on the quality of their intelligence . . ."

When these words were written in May 1940, girls who wanted to continue their education beyond the primary stage had to study at the mens' college. Thus every year four or five courageous—or foolhardy—young women adventured on the road to a bachelor's degree. It was indeed an adventure. The powerful and inflexible Confucian tradition forbade any companionship, any familiarity between the sexes. They never exchanged a word except on occasions of urgent necessity.

Nowadays, after 20 years, if I meet one of my former classmates, bald, stout, married, the father of a family, we cannot help laughing when we recall the past. How things have changed since the morning when our group of girls, wrapped in a haughty and dignified silence, arrived for the first time at Petrus Ky College, and made our way along the corridors, following the red arrows which would direct us, as we supposed, to the lecture room, but which in fact, to our great confusion, led to the lavatories!

At 18, like most of my companions, I wore my long, straight, black hair in a heavy knot at the back of my neck. Out of doors I wore silk trousers—black or white according to whether or not it was raining—beneath a flowing high-necked tunic. A wide conical hat of plaited palm-leaves protected my complexion for, paradoxically enough, while Europeans get themselves tanned and

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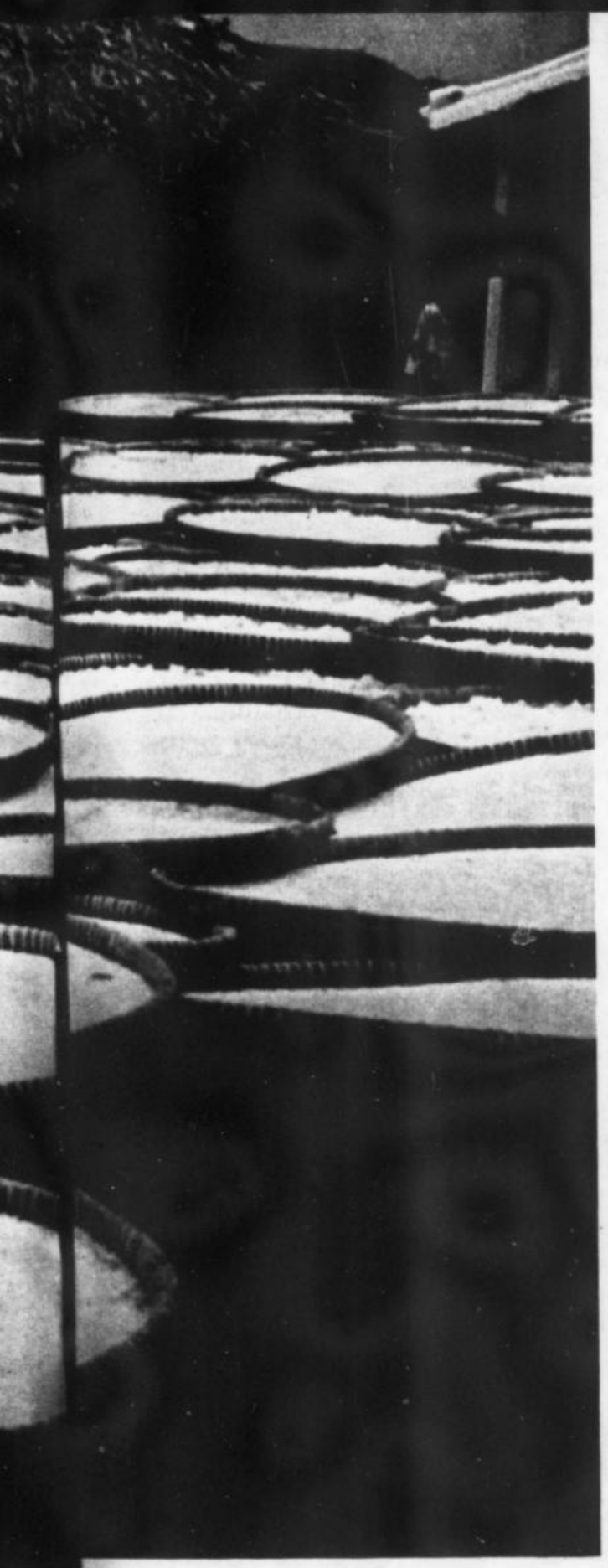

© Paul Almasy, Paris

HARVESTS GATHERED IN. Viet-Nam is a country of huge rice fields which at harvest time spread a golden carpet as far as the eye can see. Here, the harvested grains are dried on trays which look for all the world like giant water lilies covering a lake. In the countryside a woman's life is still bound to the incessant and arduous round of farming work; in the towns the status of women has been significantly improved by social changes that have taken place.

GIRL WITH A GUITAR. Whereas they once remained at home, directly under the authority of their fathers or their husbands, the women of Viet-Nam, like most of the others in the New Asia, are now finding places for themselves in a wide variety of occupations. The young woman seen here playing the "pipa", a form of guitar, is a professional musician.

Unesco Courier Archives

'With these earrings I thee wed'

bronzed by the sun till their skins are amber-coloured, we who are naturally brown-skinned endeavour by every means, including face creams and large hats to preserve a clear complexion. My lacquered wooden shoes clattered at every step. I rode to my classes every morning in a rickshaw which, by my mother's orders, conveyed me four times a day to and from my home. Mothers in those days exercised a strict supervision over their daughters.

In 1940, Viet-Nam, together with Cambodia and Laos, were part of French Indo-China. It comprised Tonkin in the north and Annam in the centre, both French Protectorates, and Cochin China, a French colony, in the south. As citizens of Cochin China we learned French and were educated in the French manner like young girls in France, although at home we lived according to the Confucian traditions and oriental customs of Viet-Nam. This circumstance may make it easier for women of other countries to understand our reactions and behaviour, which sometimes might surprise them.

Now on that May evening, while I was struggling with my essay, I heard my father coming upstairs. Good heavens, what could I have done to displease him? Whenever he came up to my room it was to scold or lecture me —reminding me of a young girl's duties to her parents and her family. This might go on for hours for my father, like every self-respecting, well-educated man, was never in a hurry.

In these circumstances there could be no thought of my essay; as usual I should have to listen, sitting motionless with downcast eyes, looking as docile as possible. In Viet-Nam, filial piety is the first and fundamental principle engraved on our hearts.

My father came in and sat down on the large couch of polished wood, without mattress or pillows on which we

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Unesco - Pierre Pittet

Left, two young women of Viet-Nam—the one in a "cycle cab" with a child on her knees; the other on a bicycle in the traditional female costume of wide-legged trousers and split tunic—wait for the traffic lights to change at a Saigon street intersection. Today, many women of Viet-Nam are entering the teaching profession. The one shown above is giving a lesson in child care to pupils of a village school.

used to sleep, our heads resting on those oblong, wicker-work blocks which though very pretty with their brightly coloured covers, were very hard and most uncomfortable. He looked at me over his spectacles and quietly said:

"Tomorrow you will take your books back to the librarian at the college and give this letter to the vice-principal before giving up your studies. Your mother and I with the approval of your grandparents, have arranged a marriage for you with the sixteenth son of Madame H. The young man is one of the most eligible matches in the country. They are Catholics and have asked that you should become one, and therefore you will do so. It is of no importance since, as a girl, you would not have to be responsible for the cult of the ancestors. Your brother will undertake this honourable duty. The day after tomorrow you will attend instruction at the Cathedral of Saigon."

THUS speedily, clearly and without discussion, the two most important decisions of my life—my conversion and my marriage—were taken by my parents.

Do not be surprised that a girl of 18, educated in Western culture for many years, should submit with such meekness to decisions of great moment affecting her personal life so closely. In Viet-Nam the family ruled everything, decided everything, but also took all responsibility for the consequences and supported all its members in any trouble... I could not, therefore, live my own life as an independent and responsible person.

In the turmoil of the months before my marriage I was scarcely able to apprehend the change which had taken place in my life, to question or to understand the real significance of events. One thing struck me, however, the presence beside me of the man with whom I was soon to share my life. As he had not been able to get the bishop's permission to take part, he merely stood respectfully by while, on the day of our bethrothal, I carried out alone the customary prostrations before the altar of my ancestors, presenting my future husband to them. After the ceremony he asked me affectionately if I was pleased with the jewels his mother had given me. These were a pair of earrings—the traditional betrothal gift, like the ring in the West—with a pendant and bracelet to match.

The southern part of Viet-Nam, before the second world war, was a country of huge rice-fields, which at harvest time spread a golden carpet as far as the eye could see. Small hamlets or trim peaceful villages lay in the shade of clumps of trees or green bamboos. A luxuriant, fertile and prosperous land! That was why its children were gentle, amiable, and smiling; too gentle, indeed, to be energetic or pugnacious, too amiable to be firm and decisive, too cheerful to be sober and ambitious.

The Chinese, who ruled us for a thousand years, were not far wrong when they called our country "Annam"—the peaceful South. The easy life, the bland Confucian ethic, the tropical heat—all these conspired to make us what we were in those tranquil and peaceful days. But one is never sufficiently distrustful of still waters.

These same Annamites (as we were called), good, generous and peaceable, suddenly exploded, as witness the events of 1945, when the people of Viet-Nam rose with incredible violence and put an end to eighty years of French rule.

This was the classic story of the insurrection of a dependent territory against foreign domination, with guerillas, massacres, bloodshed and martyrs. It was also the awakening of a people. Finally, it was the prelude to a shock which affected every member of the community

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Some of the hundreds of junks in the "floating city" at Cholon, for long an industrial and commercial centre linked with the port of Saigon. These boats, moored along a watercourse known as the "Chinese Channel", serve as homes, shops, storehouses and workshops. Cholon was founded towards the end of the 18th century by hardworking and enterprising Chinese immigrants, and has retained intact the traditional culture and character of a typically Chinese city.

© Paul Almasy, Paris

Achieving the 'golden mean' of Confucius

without exception and rocked the very foundations of society.

The family shrank to its simplest expression—father, mother and children. Individuals generally, and women in particular, no longer protected within the framework of the Great Family, began to measure their capacity to cope with life. As a result, there was a frantic rush to secure diplomas and enter professions. The young girl's future had indeed changed; marriage still was to be hoped for, but was no longer the one and only end.

For me personally the 1945 revolution was a harsh ordeal. I was then a widow with a 2-year-old son and, without a profession, without an income. I had to take refuge with my parents who, when our property had been destroyed by fire, had gone to live in a small house they owned in the capital.

ALAS, old age and the sorrow caused by the destruction of his possessions took toll of my father's delicate health and in due course he died, leaving my mother, seventeen years my senior, and my young brother of 13. He was at the awkward age and had never submitted to discipline, except from my father, who had devoted himself to training him to be the future guardian of the cult of the ancestors.

I spent three years of my life in this atmosphere of mourning, insecurity and increasing disintegration, while my mother continually bewailed the cruelty of fate, the heartlessness of friends, and the outlook of post-war society; to the end of her life she never succeeded in adapting herself to the changing world.

All this was too much for me at the age of 22. Nevertheless our troubles quickly matured me. When I considered my brother, my child and my mother, I realized that if I did not quickly take action, if I did not decide to be "the man of the household", we would soon find ourselves adrift.

What does a person do who has to support a woman not equipped for the battle of life, to educate a boy, to bring up a baby? She works. So be it, I would work. But a rapid assessment of my capacities clearly showed that I could achieve very little by that means, and who would help me to carry out my heavy responsibilities?

To marry again was out of the question; it was not considered fitting for a woman to marry twice. Was my reluctance to marry due to a desire to show myself worthy of my mother-in-law, that indomitable woman, who though widowed, was bringing up her children alone?

No, I think rather, though I was unaware of it at the time, that the fact of being able at last to take my life and my future into my own hands, having no longer either father or husband in authority over me, liberated me from my bonds, so that I intended to preserve my new-found freedom at all costs.

I WAS, so to speak, intoxicated with sense of being no longer a minor, no longer under tutelage, being able at last to make decisions for mysef. I experienced to some extent the feelings of a person who, having just learnt to drive, takes the steering wheel of his new car. It was the exhilaration of emancipation. It was, however, a time of groping, of feeling one's way, the discovery of life, of reality, for until then I had lived only at second hand.

It was not without pain and suffering but for me it was a time of great enrichment. Soon I realized that in order to fight one must be armed, and well armed, and that in every field my weapons were inadequate. To educate two boys one must oneself be educated, and I had not learned nearly enough; therefore, it was here that I had to begin.

I managed to collect enough money to enable me to go abroad and begin my studies again, at the same time supervising those of my brother and my son. Through this close contact with Europe I became, without noticing it, and in spite of myself, progressively Westernized; this was inevitable. The culture I had partially acquired, now freed from the inhibiting influence of the family, gradually developed and took root in me, soon permeating me entirely.

I became completely adult, in the Western meaning of the term; making decisions for myself, assuming responsibilities, engaging in undertakings, discussing, persuading, settling questions, becoming daily more sure of myself and of my capacities and my potentialities; already I was able to manage my two boys with some competence and authority. This went on for seven years, at the end of which I believed myself to be trained for life. Having taken my degree, I returned to Viet-Nam with my son.

In Asia, although the rhythm varied in different countries, in general changes took place with the suddenness of revolution. In Viet-Nam particularly the speed of change was stupefying. By reason of its geographical situation—the pivotal point of an Asia suddenly risen to importance—Viet-Nam is at the exact centre of the South East Asian countries. Her capital, which had been French when I left, had when I returned become cosmopolitan.

Nevertheless, cutting across all the penetration by different civilizations, and the wider opening towards the West, there was a persistent and definite return to the traditions of the past, as if the people, alarmed by so many new things and new influences, were conscious of a need to rediscover themselves.

DEEPLY influenced, in spite of ourselves, by Western culture, we now found ourselves in a completely different, environment, divided between two opposing trends. Readjustment was not altogether comfortable. It is impossible to define the effect on one's mind of the passage from an organized society to a society in course of organizing itself—as ours is today—while in spite of everything it is still part of ourselves. One is conscious of being at once strong and weak, at home and at the same time foreign, doubtful and also assured.

It took months for us to adjust ourselves to the pace of the new Viet-Nam. After having learned to advance, we learned to retreat, which we thought useless but which, nevertheless, is necessary. It is only when one has learned to move in both directions, that one really knows how to drive.

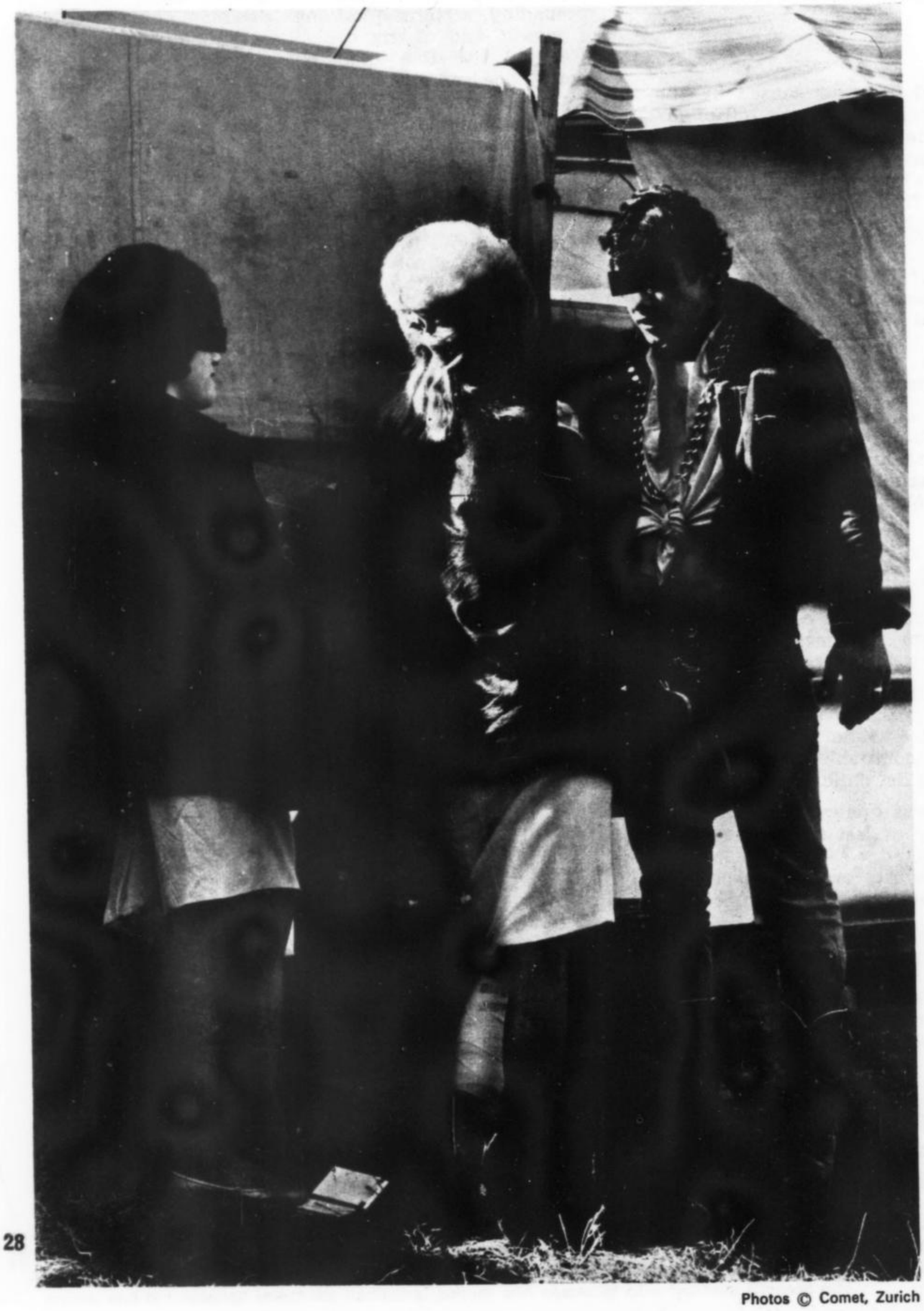
It has taken me several years to achieve that delicate balance—"the golden mean" of Confucius—between the frenzied urge towards Westernization and the simultaneous need to cling passionately to the old traditions, both of which are characteristic of Viet-Nam today. This gives me a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction which one can only experience when one's personality has become finally integrated. It is a strength and a stimulus to feel that one has at least achieved stability in a changing world.

LE KWANG KIM *is actively associated with women's movements in Viet-Nam and in other Asian countries and in particular with civic and social welfare projects. A trained pharmacist, she has travelled widely and now lives in Cholon (Saigon).*

WORLD SIDE STORY

CONCLUSION OF OUR SPECIAL INQUIRY

In its May and June issues, The Unesco Courier published three articles on juvenile delinquency based on the results of a special inquiry carried out for Unesco by William C. Kvaraceus, Director of Youth Studies at the Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship of Tufts University, Medford, U.S.A. In this final article, the author discusses delinquency as a community problem which, he stresses, should be dealt with by the community as a whole and not simply left for schools, churches and police courts to handle. The full report of this inquiry has now been published by Unesco (in English, French and Spanish) under the title "Juvenile Delinquency: A Problem for the Modern World". For further information write to Public Liaison Division, Unesco, Place de Fontenoy, Paris-7e.



The photos shown here may seem to many adults as typical of the attire of the juvenile delinquent. Formidable as it may be—with its trappings of chains, horseshoes, cowboy boots, photos of "pop" singers, kerchiefs knotted above the knee, etc.—to the psychologist and youth guidance specialists such eccentricities are not necessarily signs of delinquent intentions. The specialists admit, however, that gangs of boys (and even girls) do form a major element in the overall pattern of juvenile delinquency.

Photos © Comet, Zurich

IS THERE A SOLUTION FOR DELINQUENCY?

by William C. Kvaraceus

DELINQUENT behaviour is not a twenty-four hour malady that attacks a child like some virus disease. Since a child does not become delinquent overnight but as the result of a long and intricate series of reactions, any realistic plan to help that child will not be easy to formulate. Any person, or any community, hoping to change a specific delinquency problem must accept the fact that it is a long process, often one of discouragement and delay. It is expensive in terms of money, time and effort. It need hardly be pointed out, however, that the results of delinquency are twice as costly.

What emerges clearly from many studies, reports and surveys is that delinquent behaviour must be the concern of the entire community, not just dismissed as a problem to be handled by local schools, churches, police courts or professional agencies.

Unfortunately even the most honest and earnest attempts to curtail delinquency may fail without two essentials: funds and facts. Any operation should have as its foundation a validated theoretical frame of reference about the causes of delinquency. The community should have available facts on the local youth situation and there must be individual facts on the individual child who shows a tendency towards delinquency or who has already broken the law.

Such measures as curfews, restricting movie attendance or closing a dance-hall, are irrelevant to the real problem and, for the most part, accomplish little.

We know that there are many forces which decisively affect the growth, the development and the ultimate behaviour of the child. Among these are the home, the school, the church and church organizations, health and welfare groups and recreation organizations for young people.

One of the most crucial forces, if we consider simply the number of years during which it exerts an influence over the child, is the school. The school cannot solve the problem of delinquency alone or even attempt to prevent it single-handedly. However, its role should always be considered as a vital part of a well-planned community programme.

Together with the home, the school provides the basic learning experience for all children. Admittedly the school cannot ever completely compensate for the lack of a decent home or wise and loving parents. But it can

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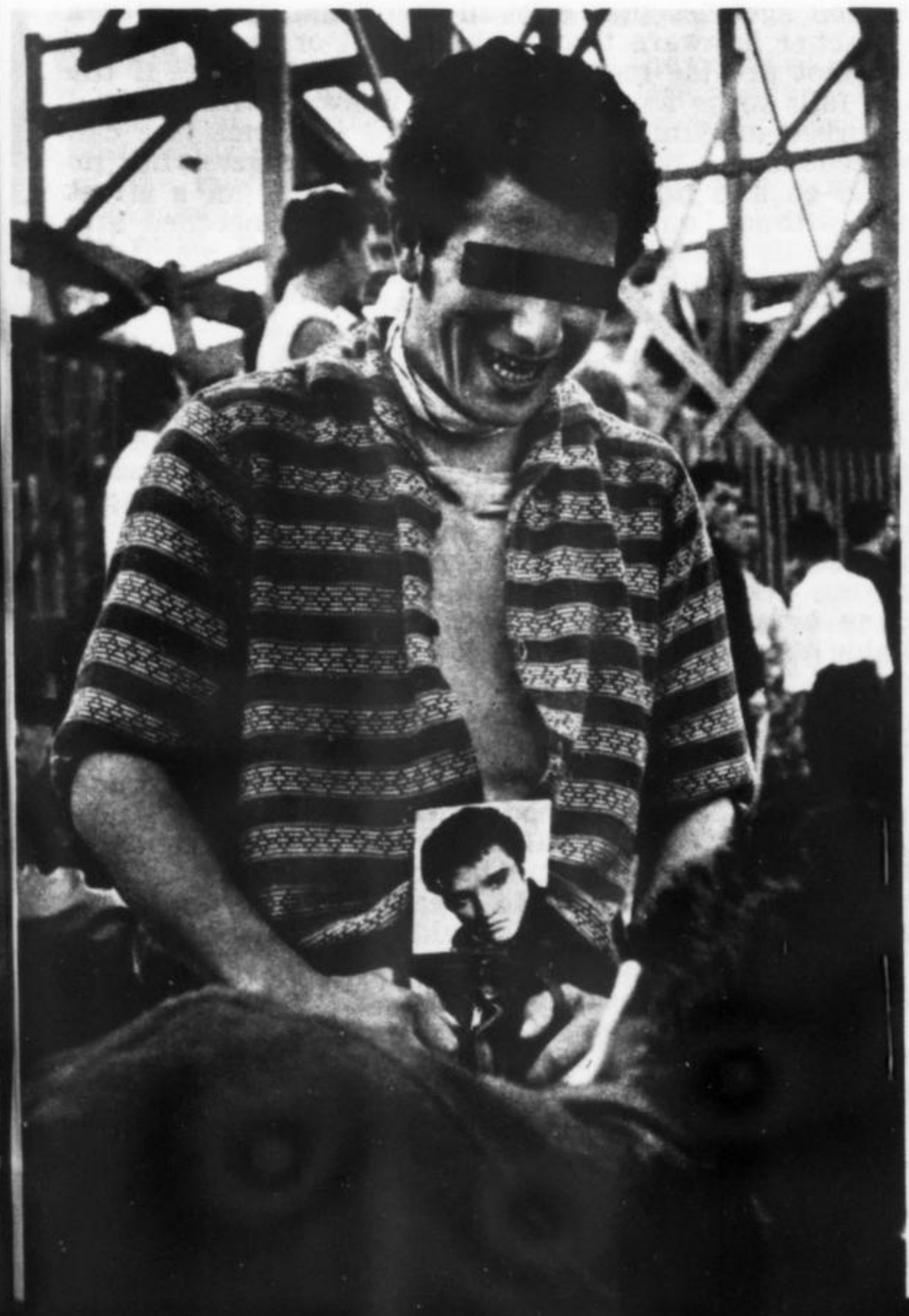

When the school 'fails' the child

do much to make the child aware of his own basic values and teach him how to develop them.

This is precisely what does not happen in the case of the juvenile delinquent. The records of many schools show with monotous regularity that these youngsters establish habits of failure and inferiority in their school years. Therefore, the question that must concern the community and the school—why do children fail?—is not easy to answer. The reasons for a child's failure vary with each pupil. The teacher often faces real limitations in trying to discover them. He is not always able to visit the child's home, he is not a psychologist, a health specialist or a case worker.

Many educators believe that far too many schools adhere too rigidly to a curriculum that is not appropriate for nor of value to every pupil. After all, they point out, good schools begin with youngsters who are already quite different from each other and enable each to develop according to his talents. The school programme which provides only a narrow, one-track academic curriculum that squeezes out overyone but the students aiming for higher education is denying equal opportunity to all youngsters by such an exclusive focus on traditional academic objectives and prestige.

During a day of violence and vandalism at the English seaside town of Margate earlier this year police arrested about 40 teenagers, members of rival juvenile gangs from London who style themselves the "Mods" (short-haired, suede-booted and jacketed) and the "Rockers" (who wear black leather jackets and fringed cowboy hats). Here, "Mods" chase a group of "Rockers" across the sands. Holiday makers, watching the scene, were obliged to dodge salvos of milk bottles and broken legs from deck chairs as the rival gangs fought a series of battles, broke shop windows and ransacked cafes.

If we agree that the child who might become a good mechanic is not to be considered inferior to the child with an interest in medicine then we must also acknowledge that a single school should accommodate and benefit both of them. Pouring all students into a single academic mould causes many children who might be vulnerable to delinquency to come a good deal closer to it. The authorities and the community should consider setting up different types of school experiences for children who cannot benefit by a standard academic education or for those children who, for different reasons, cannot hold their own in the regular classroom.

In trying to relate the problems of delinquents with their problems at school, some educators have asserted that an inability to read is frequently a strong factor in their failure. Certainly the child who cannot read adequately will only be confronted with such a rapid succession of tensions and frustrations in any classroom that it is not surprising if school becomes a place to be feared or despised. Vandalism of school property is a protest; escape is the only solution. Such a pupil may resort to truancy or drop out when he reaches the legal age.

If the school curriculum is a realistic one, there will be remedial help available, but first the child must *want* to improve. If a pupil has been humiliated too often, he may never make the necessary effort. The school that expels a child, or fails him year after year, is more or less urging that student to get out when he is least prepared to build his own life. If the school must reject a pupil, then every effort should be made to find what other help can be offered to that child by other community agencies and organizations.

But it must be pointed out that in many cities of the world the problem of juvenile delinquency and the role of the school is eclipsed by more urgent considerations. It is not always a question of improving schools for some countries, but of creating them. There is a bitter humour in the suggestion that a teacher should do something about a child's emotional problems when many teachers in Asia and Africa face a classroom each morning knowing that some children are sick and ill-fed.

It is sufficiently tragic that each year more than three million children are deprived of the right to education but it is no less depressing to learn that many schools fail to make their pupils feel that education is a personal and interesting experience. These schools work hard but the return from their work, if not the quality, is inadequate. While there are many children of the world who wish for education, it can hardly be denied that there is also an impressive number who want to escape it. And a high proportion of these children who dread school become involved in some form of delinquency.

Any school will make its maximum contribution to delinquency prevention and control by becoming a better school. It cannot achieve this alone. Ideally the school should have some link with the health, welfare and recreation agencies that exist in a community. For even if a teacher is aware that a child is ill or needs glasses, she cannot provide medicine and a pair of glasses if the family fails to do so. If a teacher is aware that a child is disturbed or damaged by emotional problems, she can only recommed a source of help. If a youngster has no place to go and nothing to do except loiter on a street corner, without outside help the most concerned and conscientious teacher cannot create a better world for him after he leaves the class.

Delinquents, for a variety of reasons, frequently do not have an accepting or reassuring relationship with their parents. They can rarely discuss any problems with an older member of the household. They are not encouraged to share their own lives or emotions with their families and this, in itself, is a damaging restriction for a child. Any education programme or any counselling that the community makes available to parents, providing it is wisely presented, can often be a turning point.

Some city communities have established neighbourhood centres where informal educational activities are conducted. These activities include parent discussion groups. Through these neighbourhood centres, people of all backgrounds who have a natural ability for different kinds of leadership can be found and involved in committee and recreational work. The basic premise of any education programme is that citizens should be educated to help themselves.

Little scientific data exists to show exactly what preventive procedures have been effective. If we think of prevention as referring both to the forestalling of delinquent behaviour and also to the reduction in its frequency and seriousness, then there are only meagre signals to

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guide us in certain directions. The very concept of delinquency prevention is still a vague, experimental one.

As in the case of prevention, the control and the rehabilitation of a juvenile delinquent often begins with the community. In highly industrialized countries, many communities have a number of services established for the benefit of all children and all youth.

These existing facilities are rarely the result of any prior overall community planning and forethought. All too often, they operate as separate little islands weakening their value by the very distances between them. It is one of the most urgent responsibilities of any community programme that attempts to prevent, let alone control, delinquency to know what these resources are, how they function, how they can be improved if necessary and in what manner they can most efficiently work together.

It is defeating, for example, for a social caseworker to try to help a delinquent when his teacher, the policeman on the corner and the people in the neighbourhood counteract her efforts, when the poverty of the family compounds the problem, and when she cannot procure for the child the treatment he many need. There should be a continuity and a high degree of co-ordination among the services offered by a community, a close co-operation between private and government agencies if their existence is to make sense. No hope exists for the delinquent unless guidance personnel, psychologists, psychiatrists and psychiatric social workers are easily and quickly accessible to the individual child through the school and the community.

Depending on the nature of the offence, a delinquent often is put in custody of a detention centre until his hearing comes up in court. This may be days or weeks. Many detention centres begin the punishment, for they resemble gaols and the "detained" are given an all too clear understanding of prison life. Other juvenile delinquents throughout the world are even confined in a local gaol and their cases are reviewed in the same courtroom where criminals stand and are sentenced.

The exceptionally lucky delinquent may be referred to a court which has a number of services at its disposal: a decent and well-staffed detention centre, clinical resources for child study, a highly-qualified professional probation staff and an effective liaison with other child welfare agencies. But it is a question of contrasts. Vast differences exist not only between nations but often there are extreme variations between courts in the same country or province.

The establishment of special juvenile courts with trained judges and special legislation and practices is encouraging; many experiences and research studies have proved the value of handling the juvenile delinquent in special courts and special institutions.

In the last fifty years probation and juvenile courts have spread to many European countries, and have come to rank among the most important measures of treatment and rehabilitation of the juvenile delinquent. Probation has been defined as "a method of dealing with specially selected offenders . . . it consists of the conditional suspension of punishment while the offender is placed under personal supervision and is given individual guidance and treatment."

SOMETIMES, possible methods of prevention, control and even rehabilitation tend to overlap. Police chiefs have often been heard to protest that many youth workers act and talk as though the police had no duties or responsibilities except to juveniles. And yet the importance of the police in a community with delinquency can hardly be overstated since they often represent the first official contact between the young offender and the law.

The policeman or juvenile officer is the one who must frequently decide whether to let the child off with a reprimand or to refer him to a juvenile court or some other agency set up to deal with such children. The police also supervise the areas where youth gather to play —public dance-halls, movie houses, public parks, street corners. How much the policeman understands about

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Success for the local police

© Magnum-Wayne Miller

In many places where special juvenile courts have been set up to deal with the juvenile delinquent, with trained judges and auxiliary services —a decent and well staffed detention centre, clinical resources for child study, a highly-qualified probation staff and an effective liaison with other child welfare agencies—encouraging results have been obtained.

delinquency can clearly be measured in his attitude towards them, which should be neither too vengeful nor, of course, too indifferent.

In several countries the evolution of the work of the police has given rise to more definite forms of action of a preventive nature. In Denmark, the Copenhagen police run four leisure-time clubs for boys in the 10 to 16 age group who come from poor quarters of the city and who have no adequate supervision in their homes. The police have also organized and maintained a club for young people over 18 years of age. All these clubs are devoted to sports and gymnastics.

In Liverpool, England, a city police programme known as the Liverpool City Police Juvenile Liaison Scheme has been developed since 1949. Its object is to deal with youngsters under 17 years of age who manifest some behaviour disorders or who have already committed petty offences. The children are referred to the Juvenile Liaison Officer through normal police channels. The liaison officer visits the child and parents often. He tries to advise and assists them in various ways.

What is most significant about the Liverpool plan is that it improves the relations between the police and the public in general. Police officers are presented not merely as awe-inspiring law-enforcing agents, but in the unexpected role of a protector of children and adviser to parents. It is claimed that this special operation was a contributing factor in diminishing the figures of juvenile delinquency in Liverpool, a city with the unhappy distinction of once having the highest delinquency rate in England.

ANOTHER police training programme, that concentrates not only on deterring delinquency but coping with it and helping the delinquent personally, is provided by the Delinquency Control Institute at the University of Southern California, United States of America. The training programme lasts twelve weeks and the course provides the officers with an excellent background for work with children in their own community. They return to their jobs with an increased ability to understand the reasons behind delinquent behaviour.

In highly developed countries, the community that attempts to cope with the individual problems of the delinquent without having the resources of a child guidance clinic close at hand places some severe, perhaps insuperable, limitations on its programmes. The work of the child guidance clinic is related to the study, diagnosis and treatment of troubled children.

All case studies involve an elaborate inquiry into the home and family of the delinquent but through the case study approach it is hoped to uncover the numerous factors which relate significantly to misbehaviour and which can finally be synthetized and analysed within a scientifically supported frame of reference.

To sum up: where there is a strong will to help the delinquent and when this is tied firmly to a sound knowledge of the meaning and implications of the delinquent act, there will emerge a promising pattern for delinquency control and prevention.

One of the most obvious reasons for our concern with juvenile delinquency is the fear of continued adult crime. It has been pointed out in one country that a very large number of men in prison began their criminal careers before they were thirteen years of age.

Therefore, we must look in two directions at the same time: immediate action and help for today's delinquents and the often neglected long road of research to give us validated methods for detecting and helping minors whose behaviour may lead to delinquency. At the same time we need to learn why certain children bend in the direction of delinquent behaviour.

Such research might seem to exclude the layman. It will be done by professionals and be interpreted by professionals. But this need not discourage any person from doing his own type of research through reading. Too often one's knowledge of delinquency is confined to what one reads hastily in the newspapers or sees in the films where a delinquent often appears as the stereotyped villain in a second-rate plot.

Our own judgement about his crime is sometimes inflamed by a dramatic denunciation in the Press. But the delinquent needs neither our indignation nor our sentimentality. He needs, most of all, to achieve what so many adults have never attained: the knowledge of what he is and what, with help, he could become.

From the Unesco Newsroom...

TESTS FOR TEACHING AIDS: A six year pilot project for the production and use of audio-visual teaching aids in adult education is being put into operation this year by the Government of Senegal and UNESCO. Films, TV, radio, filmstrips and posters will be tested and evaluated for their value in language and literacy teaching, professional and vocational training, health education and agriculture. Studies on TV will be made at a new TV station to be set up by Senegal and UNESCO.

PHOENICIANS IN THE CAUCASUS: An inscribed stone tablet discovered at Maikop in the northern Caucasus may prove to be a link between the Phœnicians and the peoples inhabiting the Caucasus about 1300-1200 B.C. According to a Soviet language specialist the hieroglyphs on the inscription are similar to those used by the Phœnicians before they devised their alphabet. (See THE UNESCO COURIER, March, 1964).

YOUTH'S ROAD TO INDIA: A practical guide to help young people to travel overland from Europe to India as cheaply as possible has now been published. Based on practical experience, the guide gives full information and advice on how to plan and make the journey. "Overland Route: Guide to Western Asia" was prepared with the support of the UNESCO System of Associated Youth Enterprises, and can be obtained from Indo-European Youth Hosteling Expedition "Elmwood," Clopton, Woodbridge, Suffolk, England, price 3/-.

CLASSES ON THE AIR: A nation-wide network of radio courses in literacy and other subjects is being organized in Ecuador by a team of Ecuadorians helped by volunteers of the European Peace Corps. Receivers have been provided by the International Labour Organization. Local technicians are being trained to take over the operation of the network at a later stage.

COSMIC CO-OPERATION: An experiment in space communication carried out by means of the American satellite, "Echo 2," has linked scientists in the U.S.A., the U.K. and the U.S.S.R. Over a period of 12 days, specialists at Zimenki Observatory, near Gorki, in the U.S.S.R., received 28 messages relayed through the satellite, and nine bounced off the moon after transmission from Jodrell Bank Observatory, in the U.K.

ART BY RADIO: A series of programmes on world art now being broadcast on the Bavarian radio network is becoming a firm favourite with listeners in the Federal Republic of Germany. By paying a subscription, listeners receive a set of colour reproductions of paintings and sculptures on view in museums in the Federal Republic. These works are described and analyzed by an art specialist during weekly programmes which were inspired by a similar venture started in the Netherlands some years ago (see THE UNESCO COURIER, Sept., 1959).

UNESCO PUBLISHES 15TH GUIDE TO WORLD TRANSLATIONS

"Index Translationum," the international bibliography of translations published each year by Unesco, reveals in its latest edition (1) that 32,787 translated books were published in 70 countries in 1962 (compared with 32,931 in 77 countries in 1961).

The bibliography lists only translated works actually published during a single year and on this basis the Bible remains the most published of all translations (221 in 1962). The works of Lenin, which usually follow, fell behind N.S. Khrushchev's writings which came second with 204 translations.

The centenary of Rabindranath Tagore in 1961 brought the great Indian writer to the fore and with 129 publications of translations of his works, he ranked as high as Tolstoy, the world's most translated novelist. Other perennial favourites with translators were as follows: Shakespeare (112 translations published), Dostoievski (95), Gorki (77), Mark Twain (59), Hemingway (54), Balzac (53), Dickens (50).

As in previous years, literature outweighed other classifications with more than half the listed works. Social sciences, law and education accounted for 3,686 titles; history, geography and biography for 2,724; applied sciences 2,659 and philology and linguistics 113.

(1) 15th edition, price: $20.50; £5.2.6. (stg); 71.75 F.

Shakespeare, Galileo and Michelangelo, whose fourth centenaries are being celebrated this year, and King George Podiebrad of Bohemia, who in 1464 proposed the creation of an organization of states committed to maintaining peace, are honoured in a new series of commemorative stamps issued in Czechoslovakia. The stamp designs show (on left from top): King George Podiebrad; two sculptures by Michelangelo; a scene from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and (above) Galileo seen beside his telescope and other instruments. These stamps can be obtained from The Unesco Philatelic Service, place de Fontenoy, Paris-7e. Write for prices and details of other stamps from Unesco member states.

Flashes...

■ *An electronic computer recently solved in 30 minutes the problem of planning a large building in Moscow. The same work would have taken one man 40 months. The computer worked out the dimensions of the building and the number and size of the rooms, lifts, staircases, and halls.*

■ *A device which keeps a constant check on radioactive contamination in the ocean depths has been perfected by the Japanese Meteorological Agency. Equipped with a scintillating counter and an automatic recorder, it can be lowered to depths of 4,000 metres and it is able to distinguish between natural radioactivity and artificial radioactive contamination.*

■ *The World Health Organization reports that the main causes of 70 per cent of deaths in 22 countries and territories of North America, Europe and Oceania are as follows: heart disease, cancer, strokes, accidents, influenza and pneumonia in that order.*

■ *Where a few semi-nomadic farmers scratch a bare living from the soil the Government of Ghana is now putting 21,000 acres of land under irrigated crops. This is the outcome of a three-year survey of the Lower Volta River flood plain undertaken by a joint team from Ghana and the Food and Agriculture Organization.*

Letters to the Editor

SPICED WITH VARIETY

Sir,

As a constant reader of THE UNESCO COURIER, I should like to congratulate you on the interest, topicality and timeliness of the subjects it deals with from geography, ornithology and zoology to geophysics, music and art in general.

I therefore disgree with suggestions that you should not deal with such subjects as birds and music, but devote your pages to articles on the peoples of the world and on relations between nations in general. I think there are already plenty of magazines and periodicals dealing with great personalities, men of the hour and international relations.

José Maria Roura
Barcelona, Spain

DEFINITE IMPROVEMENTS

Sir,

During the last two years, I have regularly read (or at least, looked through, depending on the interest aroused) each edition of THE UNESCO COURIER. I have been particularly interested in the last few issues, because the material was more lightly written, and of a wider variety of subjects. I feel previously the scientific articles have not been given their due share in each edition, and have often not been "new" enough (in subject), and "stodgily" written. I am otherwise a great admirer of your magazine.

Ian Fraser
Oundle, England

AVOID DIDACTICS

Sir,

In view of the large number of subjects you deal with and information you want to give your readers, I fully understand your desire to offer a greater variety of interesting articles. But this approach is not without certain dangers, for by so doing you deal with too many subjects and hence tend to be superficial. For me, the value of THE UNESCO COURIER has been its deep approach to problems and the way it has summarized and given form to questions inadequately presented by radio and press.

The suggestion that you alternate "special issues" and "issues with a varied table of contents" is only partly satisfactory, since it would be to the detriment of the special issues. Your technique of serializing articles, such as those on underdevelopment, seemed to me to offer all the advantages of the "special theme" dealing with a question in depth, reviewing present knowledge of the subject and in addition, making it possible for the reader to assimilate the material in easy doses. This has the further advantage of not taking up all the pages of an issue and allowing space to be devoted to other subjects. Another solution might be to publish a few articles on a given subject in the same issue when desired, which would not prevent you from adding articles on other subjects to vary the contents.

I realize that your readership is very varied and that there is no ideal solution. The best solution, perhaps, might be to strike a fair balance between the possibilities. But for goodness sake don't give us the classroom approach, which attempts to cram. Instead, prepare apt minds to *understand* and act in the world.

Brigitte Thiéblin
Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

TV TO FIGHT ILLITERACY

Sir,

I read your article "330 Million Brains for a New Era" (THE UNESCO COURIER, July/August 1963) and I felt deeply impressed about UNESCO's plan "for making some 300 million adults between the ages of 15 and 50 literate within 10 years."

Many countries are using television as the easiest way—maybe the only possible one—to reach the isolated villages. If Colombia, for example, can have T.V. network programmes that cover 90% of the country, why cannot other countries do the same?

Isn't it possible to start a campaign to get the interest of teachers, priests, pastors, judges, mayors, anyone who is literate in each community and who can afford a television set? Each educated person should be a teacher in a sense.

Can't UNESCO launch a campaign to get two free hours a day from each channel for teaching and free lessons published by newspapers and magazines? I believe in many countries much help can be got from all communication media.

I hope you can realize your dream of world-wide literacy. Millions of people will bless you if you can at least begin this remarkable task.

Helena Rocha de Tejera
Washington D.C., U.S.A.

POPULATION EXPLOSION

Sir,

The spectacular growth of the world's population is certainly the outstanding phenomenon of our times. For present generations it poses two capital problems: how to satisfy the basic needs of hundreds of millions of human beings who live on the brink of despair; how to canalize the constantly increasing flow of new lives that today seems to be reaching devastating proportions in the underdeveloped regions.

Can we actually stop this flow? Is the increase in world population a constant in history? What is the meaning of the human species within Nature's cycle of life? These and other related questions need urgent study, and there should be universal awareness of their importance.

In my view the fundamental question is not to determine the maximum number of people that can be fed on our planet, whether, for example, it can support 30,000 million human beings, as optimists like Colin Clark, and others tell us; it is to determine the relationship that exists between, on the one hand, the increase in population, and, on the other, the social organization, economic growth and scientific and technical progress of man throughout his history.

Guillermo Leret Ruiz
Madrid, Spain

MARIA MONTESSORI

Sir,

My pleasure at finding Dr. Maria Montessori the subject of an article in your April issue turned to dismay and chagrin that Maria Remiddi should write: "She undoubtedly follows the great tradition of Rousseau..."

Such an observation is as jejune and unscholarly as to conclude that the Christian sacraments are in the "great tradition" of the pagan mystery cults.

In this time of unparalleled Christian scholarship, when sensitivity to spiritual values and to ecumenism is universal (and when it is no longer *de rigueur* even among the sophisticated to ignore Christianity), why should not the sole and the correct source of Dr. Montessori's inspired and dedicated labours —her Christian concept of human dignity—be recognized and applauded? Jean-Jacques Rousseau indeed! The suggestion is, to put it mildly, unseemly.

It is disconcerting to think that the editor of a magazine of THE UNESCO COURIER's stature should wittingly or unwittingly have allowed such a piece of nonsense to appear in an article marred only by the author's incomprehension of Dr. Maria Montessori's individual religious genius.

(Rev.) James W. Gray
Muenster, Sask., Canada

THREE IN ONE

Sir,

I should like to support the suggestion of Manuel Vinent, of the the Martel Speleological Group in Havana (March 1964), that THE UNESCO COURIER publish a special issue on speleology. I preside over a group of amateur speleologists and geologists in Nice, many of whom are readers of your magazine. We were especially pleased by the material you published on volcanoes (Oct. 1963) and we should like to see other articles on this kind of science and particularly on speleology. It is truly a fascinating activity which combines science, exploration and sport.

Jean Feraud
Nice, France

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ON A BEACH IN CEYLON...

These fishermen's wives follow a way of life that differs little from that led by their grandmothers. But in the middle classes that have come into being in Ceylon in recent decades, an increasing number of women are now living an entirely new kind of life. One of them, an educationist, describes her personal experiences on page 7.